

WRIGHT

Richard Nathaniel

W

4/15
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/20/88 BY SP1 AGJ
289882

File No. 100-41674-1A9nd

Date Received 4-3-58

From PASSPORT OFFICE
(Name of Contributor)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
(Address of Contributor)

By [REDACTED]
(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned Yes ()
No (X)

Description:

NEGATIVE AND 5 PRINTS
OF PHOTO OF RICHARD
WRIGHT.

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
APR - 3 1958	
FBI - NE.	

b7c

WRIGHT, R. 2

WRIGHT, RICHARD MATTHEWEL

Apartment 3F
82 Washington Place
New York, New York (Res.)
free-lance writer

NATIVE BORN

Race
Date of Birth
Place of Birth

COMMUNIST

100-41674

negro
9/4/08
Hatchers, Miss.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 20882,
DATE 10/2/82 BY 2014350



FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

XXXXXX
 XXXXXX
 XXXXXX

2

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7C with no segregable material available for release to you.

☒ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information:

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-1A9

XXXXXX
 XXXXXX
 XXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET3

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-1A6

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



RICHARD WRIGHT

WRIGHT, R. 4

251



WRIGHT, R. 5

250

(Prepared by Photo Lab.)

DATE RECEIVED 9/4/44

FROM Current Biography 1940
(NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR)

- page 885 -

(ADDRESS OF CONTRIBUTOR)

b7c

BY [REDACTED]
(NAME OF SPECIAL AGENT)
YES ()
NO ()

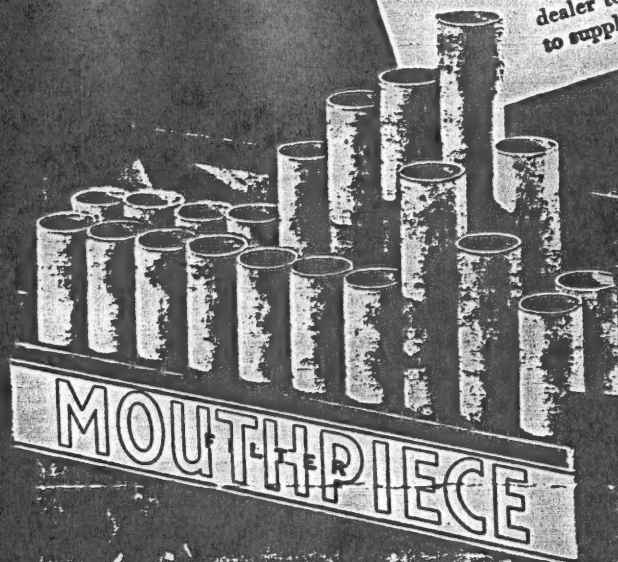
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/22/88 BY SP1AC/ly negative & prints
289882.

DESCRIPTION: Picture of Subject

FILE NO. 100-41674-144

Apology

We are sorry if you meet with difficulties in getting Parliament cigarettes. We are making as many as ever, all that our machines will properly produce. But we can neither make enough to meet the growing demand nor get additional manufacturing equipment at this time. So please bear with us—and with your dealer too. He's as anxious to supply you as we are.



Benson & Hedges

FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

VAIGAL R. 7

spite of his bad ear. His attitude has completely changed. He is a cheerful, friendly, hard-working boy.

What is the central fact in the correcting of criminals? Is it not that the criminal decides whether he will try to reform or not? It is his decision, not ours. If he does not want to try, if he will make no effort to redeem himself, he stays unredeemed and unrehabilitated. However favorable may be the opportunities we provide, he may refuse to take them. It is the old problem of taking a horse to water.

Therefore it is our job, so far as we can, to stimulate him to try, to treat him in a way which is calculated to make him try. So far as we can, we must avoid doing things which will weaken his resolution or rouse his opposition.

According to the American Law Institute, criminals should be treated primarily as patients in need of therapy. The following statement is substantially the proposition which the Youth Correction Authority makes to the criminal: —

"You have committed a crime and are in trouble. We will help you. Your crime is due to some emotional maladjustment or conflict. We will study you to find out what it is. We will prescribe treatment for you. We will determine when you have been cured. We will parole or discharge you when we decide it is safe to do so.

"You must understand that we are not punishing you. We are giving you therapeutic treatment. We are dealing with the causes of behavior — not with the behavior itself. And since everyone is different and the treatment applied to each person is individually designed to cure his weaknesses, you must not compare the treatment you get with that which another person receives and think he is being treated more or less favorably than you are. Nor should you feel, because you have performed your work as well as the man with whom you have been working, that if he is discharged from custody, you also ought to be discharged from custody. You must rely on our judgment. We have to measure your characteristics. We may find in you a dangerous quality; and even if you do everything perfectly which we require of you, you may still need a long course of treatment to overcome it."

What would be the answer?

"That's not good enough. I have lost my liberty and I want to get it back. But you promise me nothing. You tell me that even if I do everything exactly as you require, you may still hold out on me. You say that you may let my partner go home, but may keep me indefinitely, even if I have done as well as he has or better. Why should I try?"

Would it not be better if the Correction Authority should say this: —

"You have shown that you are unable or unwilling to obey the rules of the community. You have forfeited your right to be a free man. But we will give you a chance to earn your freedom again; and if you earn it, you will get it. We give you our word on that.

"This is what you have to do: There are ten courses available for you to take. You can take any one of them; and if you pass it successfully, you go free. The courses provide training in different trades and professions. People's abilities and aptitudes vary greatly and that is the reason we give a variety of courses. Almost anybody should find one that will suit him. But although the subject matter is different, the social strains in each course are equal. To complete it successfully you must show that you have learned how to live with other people. Your temper will be severely tested, temptations will appear unexpectedly, you will be driven to the limit of your endurance. These are not attempts to catch you. They are tests. They are part of your training, like live ammunition in the tests for the Army and the Navy.

"We want you to learn self-control, to be ready for anything that is likely to occur in the ordinary conditions of life; and before you can be free, you must make the grade just as an airplane pilot must make the grade before he gets his wings, or a medical student before he can practice medicine. But this we promise you. If you make the grade, you go free. You will be measured by what you do, by your conduct, by the way you stand up under pressure. So long as you have done the work up to the required standard, you shall go free. It is our job to make our tests sufficiently searching to detect your weaknesses.

"As to which course you take, that is your choice. We will give you an aptitude test and the best advice we can. But you are free to choose. We will give you any help in our power. If you are ill, you will get good care in the hospital. If you are disturbed, there is a psychiatrist to whom you can go if you want. If you get mixed up in your work, any one of the instructors will be glad to give you personal tutoring to straighten you out. And the pastor is truly your friend. He is always there for you to go to.

"But remember this: Your freedom depends on yourself, on your taking the opportunity we are giving you, on the way you do the work. We can give you the chance, but you must do the job. You are the master of your fate. Now it's up to you."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12-12-88 BY SP-1 AGT

manner. He suffered from asthma and would snort at unexpected intervals. Now and then he would punctuate his flow of words by taking a nip from a bottle of whiskey. He had traveled half around the world and his talk was pitted with vague allusions to European cities. I met him in his apartment, listened to him intently, observed him minutely, for I knew that I was facing one of the leaders of World Communism.

"Hello, Wright," he snorted. "I've heard about you."

As we shook hands he burst into a loud, seemingly causeless laugh; and as he guffawed I could not tell whether his mirth was directed at me or was meant to hide his uneasiness.

"I hope what you've heard about me is good," I parried.

"Sit down," he laughed again, waving me to a chair. "Yes, they tell me you write."

"I try to," I said.

"You can write," he snorted. "I read that article you wrote for the *New Masses* about Joe Louis. Good stuff. First political treatment of sports we've yet had. Ha-ha."

I waited. I had thought that I should encounter a man of ideas, but he was not that. Then perhaps he was a man of action? But that was not indicated either.

"They tell me that you are a friend of Ross," he shot at me.

I paused before answering. He had not asked me directly, but had hinted in a neutral, teasing way. Ross, I had been told, was slated for expulsion from the party on the ground that he was "anti-leadership"; and if a member of the Communist International was asking me if I was a friend of a man about to be expelled, he was indirectly asking me if I was loyal or not.

"Ross is not particularly a friend of mine," I said frankly. "But I know him well; in fact, quite well."

"If he isn't your friend, how do you happen to know him so well?" he asked, laughing to soften the hard threat of his question.

"I was writing an account of his life and I know him as well, perhaps, as anybody," I told him.

"I heard about that," he said. "Wright. Ha-ha. Say, let me call you Dick, hunh?"

"Go ahead," I said.

"Dick," he said, "Ross is a nationalist." He paused to let the weight of his accusation sink in. He meant that Ross's militancy was extreme. "We Communists don't dramatize Negro nationalism," he said in a voice that laughed, accused, and drawled.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"We're not advertising Ross." He spoke directly now.

"We're talking about two different things," I said. "You seem worried about my making Ross popular because he is your political opponent. But I'm not concerned about Ross's politics at all. The man struck me as one who typified certain traits of the Negro migrant. I've already sold a story based upon an incident in his life."

Nealson became excited.

"What was the incident?" he asked.

"Some trouble he got into when he was thirteen years old," I said.

"Oh, I thought it was political," he said, shrugging.

"But I'm telling you that you are wrong about that," I explained. "I'm not trying to fight you with my writing. I've no political ambitions. You must believe that. I'm trying to depict Negro life."

"Have you finished writing about Ross?"

"No," I said. "I dropped the idea. Our party members were suspicious of me and were afraid to talk." He laughed.

"Dick," he began, "we're short of forces. We're facing a grave crisis."

"The party's always facing a crisis," I said.

His smile left and he stared at me.

"You're not cynical, are you, Dick?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But it's the truth. Each week, each month there's a crisis."

"You're a funny guy," he said, laughing, snorting again. "But we've got a job to do. We're altering our work. Fascism's the danger, the danger now to all people."

"I understand," I said.

"We've got to defeat the Fascists," he said, snorting from asthma. "We've discussed you and know your abilities. We want you to work with us. We've got to crash out of our narrow way of working and get our message to the church people, students, club people, professionals, middle class."

"I've been called names," I said softly. "Is that crashing out of the narrow way?"

"Forget that," he said.

He had not denied the name-calling. That meant that, if I did not obey him, the name-calling would begin again.

"I don't know if I fit into things," I said openly.

"We want to trust you with an important assignment," he said.

"What do you want me to do?"

"We want you to organize a committee against the high cost of living."

"The high cost of living?" I exclaimed. "What do I know about such things?"

I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST

by RICHARD WRIGHT

9

WITH the John Reed clubs now dissolved, I was free of all party relations. I avoided unit meetings for fear of being subjected to discipline. Occasionally a Negro Communist — defying the code that enjoined him to shun suspect elements — came to my home and informed me of the current charges that Communists were bringing against one another. To my astonishment I heard that Buddy Nealson had branded me a “smuggler of reaction.”

Buddy Nealson was the Negro who had formulated the Communist position for the American Negro; he had made speeches in the Kremlin; he had spoken before Stalin himself.

“Why does Nealson call me that?” I asked.

“He says that you are a petty bourgeois degenerate,” I was told.

“What does that mean?”

“He says that you are corrupting the party with your ideas.”

“How?”

There was no answer. I decided that my relationship with the party was about over; I should have to leave it. The attacks were growing worse, and my refusal to react incited Nealson into coining more absurd phrases. I was termed a “bastard intellectual,” an “incipient Trotskyite”; it was claimed that I possessed an “anti-leadership attitude” and that I was manifesting “seraphim tendencies” — a phrase meaning that one has withdrawn from the struggle of life and considers oneself infallible.

Working all day and writing half the night brought me down with a severe chest ailment. While I was ill, a knock came at my door one morning. My

RICHARD WRIGHT is an American Negro whose schooling carried him through the grammar grades, and who has been educating himself ever since. His novel, *Native Son*, which was widely discussed in the year of its publication (1940), and his forthcoming autobiography, which will appear later this year, proclaim him as one of the most forthright and eloquent authors of his race.

This is the second of two installments.

mother admitted Ed Green, the man who had demanded to know what use I planned to make of the material I was collecting from the comrades. I stared at him as I lay abed and I knew that he considered me a clever and sworn enemy of the party. Bitterness welled up in me.

“What do you want?” I asked bluntly. “You see I’m ill.”

“I have a message from the party for you,” he said.

I had not said good day, and he had not offered to say it. He had not smiled, and neither had I. He looked curiously at my bleak room.

“This is the home of a bastard intellectual,” I cut at him.

He stared without blinking. I could not endure his standing there so stone-like. Common decency made me say, “Sit down.”

His shoulders stiffened.

“I’m in a hurry.” He spoke like an army officer.

“What do you want to tell me?”

“Do you know Buddy Nealson?” he asked.

I was suspicious. Was this a political trap?

“What about Buddy Nealson?” I asked, committing myself to nothing until I knew the kind of reality I was grappling with.

“He wants to see you,” Ed Green said.

“What about?” I asked, still suspicious.

“He wants to talk with you about your party work,” he said.

“I’m ill and can’t see him until I’m well,” I said.

Ed Green stood for a fraction of a second, then turned on his heel and marched out of the room.

When my chest healed, I sought an appointment with Buddy Nealson. He was a short, black man with an ever ready smile, thick lips, a furtive manner, and a greasy, sweaty look. His bearing was nervous, self-conscious; he seemed always to be hiding some deep irritation. He spoke in short, jerky sentences, hopping nimbly from thought to thought as though his mind worked in a free, asso-

"It's easy. You can learn," he said.

I was in the midst of writing a novel and he was calling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries. "He doesn't think much of what I'm trying to do," I thought.

"Comrade Nealson," I said, "a writer who hasn't written anything worth while is a most doubtful person. Now, I'm in that category. Yet I think I can write. I don't want to ask for special favors, but I'm in the midst of a book which I hope to complete in six months or so. Let me convince myself that I'm wrong about my hankering to write and then I'll be with you all the way."

"Dick," he said, turning in his chair and waving his hand as though to brush away an insect that was annoying him, "you've got to get to the masses of people."

"You've seen some of my work," I said. "Isn't it just barely good enough to warrant my being given a chance?"

"The party can't deal with your feelings," he said.

"Maybe I don't belong in the party," I stated it in full.

"Oh, no! Don't say that," he said, snorting. He looked at me. "You're blunt."

"I put things the way I feel them," I said. "I want to start in right with you. I've had too damn much crazy trouble in the party."

He laughed and lit a cigarette.

"Dick," he said, shaking his head, "the trouble with you is that you've been around with those white artists on the North Side too much. You even talk like 'em. You've got to know your own people."

"I think I know them," I said, realizing that I could never really talk with him. "I've been inside of three fourths of the Negroes' homes on the South Side."

"But you've got to work with 'em," he said.

"I was working with Ross until I was suspected of being a spy," I said.

"Dick," he spoke seriously now, "the party has decided that you are to accept this task."

I was silent. I knew the meaning of what he had said. A decision was the highest injunction that a Communist could receive from his party, and to break a decision was to break the effectiveness of the party's ability to act. In principle I heartily agreed with this, for I knew that it was impossible for working people to forge instruments of political power until they had achieved unity of action. Oppressed for centuries, divided, hopeless, corrupted, misled, they were cynical — as I had once been — and the Communist method of unity

had been found historically to be the only means of achieving discipline. In short, Nealson had asked me directly if I were a Communist or not. I wanted to be a Communist, but my kind of Communist. I wanted to shape people's feelings, awaken their hearts. But I could not tell Nealson that; he would only have snorted.

"I'll organize the committee and turn it over to someone else," I suggested.

"You don't want to do this, do you?" he asked.

"No," I said firmly.

"What would you like to do on the South Side, then?"

"I'd like to organize Negro artists," I said.

"But the party doesn't need that now," he said.

I rose, knowing that he had no intention of letting me go after I had organized the committee. I wanted to tell him that I was through, but I was not ready to bring matters to a head. I went out, angry with myself, angry with him, angry with the party. Well, I had not broken the decision, but neither had I accepted it wholly. I had dodged, trying to save time for writing, time to think.

10

MY TASK consisted in attending meetings until the late hours of the night, taking part in discussions, or lending myself generally along with other Communists in leading the people of the South Side. We debated the housing situation, the best means of forcing the city to authorize open hearings on conditions among Negroes. I gritted my teeth as the daily value of pork chops was tabulated, longing to be at home with my writing.

Nealson was cleverer than I and he confronted me before I had a chance to confront him. I was summoned one night to meet Nealson and a "friend." When I arrived at a South Side hotel I was introduced to a short, yellow man who carried himself like Napoleon. He wore glasses, kept his full lips pursed as though he were engaged in perpetual thought. He swaggered when he walked. He spoke slowly, precisely, trying to charge each of his words with more meaning than the words were able to carry. He talked of trivial things in lofty tones. He said that his name was Smith, that he was from Washington, that he planned to launch a national organization among Negroes to federalize all existing Negro institutions so as to achieve a broad unity of action. The three of us sat at a table, facing one another. I knew that another and last offer was about to be made to me, and if I did not accept it, there would be open warfare.

"Wright, how would you like to go to Switzerland?" Smith asked with dramatic suddenness.

"I'd like it," I said. "But I'm tied up with work now."

"You can drop that," Nealson said. "This is important."

"What would I do in Switzerland?" I asked.

"You'll go as a youth delegate," Smith said.

"From there you can go to the Soviet Union."

"Much as I'd like to, I'm afraid I can't make it," I said honestly. "I simply cannot drop the writing I'm doing now."

We sat looking at one another, smoking silently.

"Has Nealson told you how I feel?" I asked Smith.

Smith did not answer. He stared at me a long time, then spat: "Wright, you're a fool!"

I rose. Smith turned away from me. A breath more of anger and I should have driven my fist into his face. Nealson laughed sheepishly, snorting.

"Was that necessary?" I asked, trembling.

I stood recalling how, in my boyhood, I would have fought until blood ran had anyone said anything like that to me. But I was a man now and master of my rage, able to control the surging emotions. I put on my hat and walked to the door. "Keep cool," I said to myself. "Don't let this get out of hand."

"This is good-bye," I said.

I attended the next unit meeting and asked for a place on the agenda, which was readily granted. Nealson was there. Evans was there. Ed Green was there. When my time came to speak, I said:—

"Comrades, for the past two years I've worked daily with most of you. Despite this, I have for some time found myself in a difficult position in the party. What has caused this difficulty is a long story which I do not care to recite now; it would serve no purpose. But I tell you honestly that I think I've found a solution of my difficulty. I am proposing here tonight that my membership be dropped from the party rolls. No ideological differences impel me to say this. I simply do not wish to be bound any longer by the party's decisions. I should like to retain my membership in those organizations in which the party has influence, and I shall comply with the party's program in those organizations. I hope that my words will be accepted in the spirit in which they are said. Perhaps sometime in the future I can meet and talk with the leaders of the party as to what tasks I can best perform."

I sat down amid a profound silence. The Negro secretary of the meeting looked frightened, glancing at Nealson, Evans, and Ed Green.

"Is there any discussion on Comrade Wright's statement?" the secretary asked finally.

"I move that discussion on Wright's statement be deferred," Nealson said.

A quick vote confirmed Nealson's motion. I looked about the silent room, then reached for my hat and rose.

"I should like to go now," I said.

No one said anything. I walked to the door and out into the night and a heavy burden seemed to lift from my shoulders. I was free. And I had done it in a decent and forthright manner. I had not been bitter. I had not raked up a single recrimination. I had attacked no one. I had disavowed nothing.

The next night two Negro Communists called at my home. They pretended to be ignorant of what had happened at the unit meeting. Patiently I explained what had occurred.

"Your story does not agree with what Nealson says," they said, revealing the motive of their visit.

"And what does Nealson say?" I asked.

"He says that you are in league with a Trotskyite group, and that you made an appeal for other party members to follow you in leaving the party."

"What?" I gasped. "That's not true. I asked that my membership be dropped. I raised no political issues." What did this mean? I sat pondering. "Look, maybe I ought to make my break with the party clean. If Nealson's going to act this way, I'll resign."

"You can't resign," they told me.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"No one can resign from the Communist Party."

I looked at them and laughed.

"You're talking crazy," I said.

"Nealson would expel you publicly, cut the ground from under your feet if you resigned," they said. "People would think that something was wrong if someone like you quit here on the South Side."

I was angry. Was the party so weak and uncertain of itself that it could not accept what I had said at the unit meeting? Who thought up such tactics? Then, suddenly, I understood. These were the secret, underground tactics of the political movement of the Communists under the tsars of Old Russia! The Communist Party felt that it had to assassinate me morally merely because I did not want to be bound by its decisions. I saw now that my comrades were acting out a fantasy that had no relation whatever to the reality of their environment.

"Tell Nealson that if he fights me, then, by God, I'll fight him," I said. "If he leaves this damn thing where it is, then all right. If he thinks I won't fight him publicly, he's crazy!"

I was not able to know if my statement reached Nealson. There was no public outcry against me, but in the ranks of the party itself a storm broke loose and I was branded a traitor, an unstable personality, and one whose faith had failed.

My comrades had known me, my family, my friends; they, God knows, had known my aching poverty. But they had never been able to conquer their fear of the individual way in which I acted and lived, an individuality which life had seared into my bones.

11

I WAS transferred by the relief authorities from the South Side Boys' Club to the Federal Negro Theater to work as a publicity agent. There were days when I was acutely hungry for the incessant analyses that went on among the comrades, but whenever I heard news of the party's inner life, it was of charges and countercharges, reprisals and counterreprisals.

The Federal Negro Theater, for which I was doing publicity, had run a series of ordinary plays, all of which had been revamped to "Negro style," with jungle scenes, spirituals, and all. For example, the skinny white woman who directed it, an elderly missionary type, would take a play whose characters were white, whose theme dealt with the Middle Ages, and recast it in terms of Southern Negro life with overtones of African backgrounds. Contemporary plays dealing realistically with Negro life were spurned as being controversial. There were about forty Negro actors and actresses in the theater, lolling about, yearning, disgruntled.

What a waste of talent, I thought. Here was an opportunity for the production of a worth-while Negro drama and no one was aware of it. I studied the situation, then laid the matter before white friends of mine who held influential positions in the Works Progress Administration. I asked them to replace the white woman — including her quaint aesthetic notions — with someone who knew the Negro and the theater. They promised me that they would act.

Within a month the white woman director had been transferred. We moved from the South Side to the Loop and were housed in a first-rate theater. I successfully recommended Charles DeSheim, a talented Jew, as director. DeSheim and I held long talks during which I outlined what I thought could be accomplished. I urged that our first offering should be a bill of three one-act plays, including Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, a grim, poetical, powerful one-acter dealing with chain-gang conditions in the South.

I was happy. At last I was in a position to make suggestions and have them acted upon. I was convinced that we had a rare chance to build a genuine Negro theater. I convoked a meeting and introduced DeSheim to the Negro company, telling them that he was a man who knew the theater, who would lead them toward serious dramatics. DeSheim made a speech wherein he said that he was not at the theater to direct it, but to help the Negroes to direct it. He spoke so simply and eloquently that they rose and applauded him.

I then proudly passed out copies of Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun* to all members of the company. DeSheim assigned reading parts. I sat down to enjoy adult Negro dramatics. But something went wrong. The Negroes stammered and faltered in their lines. Finally they stopped reading altogether. DeSheim looked frightened. One of the Negro actors rose.

"Mr. DeSheim," he began, "we think this play is indecent. We don't want to act in a play like this before the American public. I don't think any such conditions exist in the South. I lived in the South and I never saw any chain gangs. Mr. DeSheim, we want a play that will make the public love us."

"What kind of play do you want?" DeSheim asked them.

They did not know. I went to the office and looked up their records and found that most of them had spent their lives playing cheap vaudeville. I had thought that they played vaudeville because the legitimate theater was barred to them, and now it turned out they wanted none of the legitimate theater, that they were scared spitless at the prospects of appearing in a play that the public might not like, even though they did not understand that public and had no way of determining its likes or dislikes.

I felt — but only temporarily — that perhaps the whites were right, that Negroes were children and would never grow up. DeSheim informed the company that he would produce any play they liked, and they sat like frightened mice, possessing no words to make known their vague desires.

When I arrived at the theater a few mornings later, I was horrified to find that the company had drawn up a petition demanding the ousting of DeSheim. I was asked to sign the petition and I refused.

"Don't you know your friends?" I asked them.

They glared at me. I called DeSheim to the theater and we went into a frantic conference.

"What must I do?" he asked.

"Take them into your confidence," I said. "Let them know that it is their right to petition for a redress of their grievances."

DeSheim thought my advice sound and, accordingly, he assembled the company and told them that they had a right to petition against him if they wanted to, but that he thought any misunderstandings that existed could be settled smoothly.

"Who told you that we were getting up a petition?" a black man demanded.

DeSheim looked at me and stammered wordlessly.

"There's an Uncle Tom in the theater!" a black girl yelled.

After the meeting a delegation of Negro men came to my office and took out their pocketknives and flashed them in my face.

"You get the hell off this job before we cut your bellybutton out!" they said.

I telephoned my white friends in the Works Progress Administration: "Transfer me at once to another job, or I'll be murdered."

Within twenty-four hours DeSheim and I were given our papers. We shook hands and went our separate ways.

I was transferred to a white experimental theatrical company as a publicity agent and I resolved to keep my ideas to myself, or, better, to write them down and not attempt to translate them into reality.

12

ONE evening a group of Negro Communists called at my home and asked to speak to me in strict secrecy. I took them into my room and locked the door.

"Dick," they began abruptly, "the party wants you to attend a meeting Sunday."

"Why?" I asked. "I'm no longer a member."

"That's all right. They want you to be present," they said.

"Communists don't speak to me on the street," I said. "Now, why do you want me at a meeting?"

They hedged. They did not want to tell me.

"If you can't tell me, then I can't come," I said.

They whispered among themselves and finally decided to take me into their confidence.

"Dick, Ross is going to be tried," they said.

"For what?"

They recited a long list of political offenses of which they alleged that he was guilty.

"But what has that got to do with me?"

"If you come, you'll find out," they said.

"I'm not that naïve," I said. I was suspicious now. Were they trying to lure me to a trial and expel me? "This trial might turn out to be mine."

They swore that they had no intention of placing me on trial, that the party merely wanted me to

observe Ross's trial so that I might learn what happened to "enemies of the working class."

As they talked, my old love of witnessing something new came over me. I wanted to see this trial, but I did not want to risk being placed on trial myself.

"Listen," I told them. "I'm not guilty of Nealson's charges. If I showed up at this trial, it would seem that I am."

"No, it won't. Please come."

"All right. But, listen. If I'm tricked, I'll fight. You hear? I don't trust Nealson. I'm not a politician and I cannot anticipate all the funny moves of a man who spends his waking hours plotting."

Ross's trial took place that following Sunday afternoon. Comrades stood inconspicuously on guard about the meeting hall, at the doors, down the street, and along the hallways. When I appeared, I was ushered in quickly. I was tense. It was a rule that once you had entered a meeting of this kind you could not leave until the meeting was over; it was feared that you might go to the police and denounce them all.

Ross, the accused, sat alone at a table in the front of the hall, his face distraught. I felt sorry for him; yet I could not escape feeling that he enjoyed this. For him, this was perhaps the highlight of an otherwise bleak existence.

In trying to grasp why Communists hated intellectuals, my mind was led back again to the accounts I had read of the Russian Revolution. There had existed in Old Russia millions of poor, ignorant people who were exploited by a few educated, arrogant noblemen, and it became natural for the Russian Communists to associate betrayal with intellectualism. But there existed in the Western world an element that baffled and frightened the Communist Party: the prevalence of self-achieved literacy. Even a Negro, entrapped by ignorance and exploitation, — as I had been, — could, if he had the will and the love for it, learn to read and to understand the world in which he lived. And it was these people that the Communists could not understand.

The trial began in a quiet, informal manner. The comrades acted like a group of neighbors sitting in judgment upon one of their kind who had stolen a chicken. Anybody could ask and get the floor. There was absolute freedom of speech. Yet the meeting had an amazingly formal structure of its own, a structure that went as deep as the desire of men to live together.

A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party rose and gave a description of the world situation. He spoke without emotion and

I could not stay until the end. I was anxious to get out of the hall and into the streets and shake free from the gigantic tension that had hold of me. I rose and went to the door; a comrade shook his head, warning me that I could not leave until the trial had ended.

"You can't leave now," he said.

"I'm going out of here," I said, my anger making my voice louder than I intended.

We glared at each other. Another comrade came running up. I stepped forward. The comrade who had rushed up gave the signal for me to be allowed to leave. They did not want violence, and neither did I. They stepped aside.

I went into the dark Chicago streets and walked home through the cold, filled with a sense of sadness. Once again I told myself that I must learn to stand alone. I did not feel so wounded by their rejection of me that I wanted to spend my days bleating about what they had done. Perhaps what I had already learned to feel in my childhood saved me from that futile path. I lay in bed that night and said to myself: "I'll be for them, even though they are not for me."

13

FROM the Federal Experimental Theater I was transferred to the Federal Writers' Project, and I tried to earn my bread by writing guidebooks. Many of the writers on the project were members of the Communist Party and they kept their revolutionary vows that restrained them from speaking to "traitors of the working class." I sat beside them in the office, ate next to them in restaurants, and rode up and down in the elevators with them, but they always looked straight ahead, wordlessly.

After working on the project for a few months, I was made acting supervisor of essays and straightway I ran into political difficulties. One morning the administrator of the project called me into his office.

"Wright, who are your friends on this project?" he asked.

"I don't know," I said. "Why?"

"Well, you ought to find out soon," he said.

"What do you mean?"

"Some people are asking for your removal on the ground that you are incompetent," he said.

"Who are they?"

He named several of my erstwhile comrades. Yes, it had come to that. They were trying to take the bread out of my mouth.

"What do you propose to do about their complaints?" I asked.

"Nothing," he said, laughing. "I think I understand what's happening here. I'm not going to let them drive you off this job."

I thanked him and rose to go to the door. Something in his words had not sounded right. I turned and faced him.

"This job?" I repeated. "What do you mean?"

"You mean to say that you don't know?" he asked.

"Know what? What are you talking about?"

"Why did you leave the Federal Negro Theater?"

"I had trouble there. They drove me off the job, the Negroes did."

"And you don't think that they had any encouragement?" he asked me ironically.

I sat again. This was deadly. I gaped at him.

"You needn't fear here," he said. "You work, write."

"It's hard to believe that," I murmured.

"Forget it," he said.

But the worst was yet to come. One day at noon I closed my desk and went down in the elevator. When I reached the first floor of the building, I saw a picket line moving to and fro in the streets. Many of the men and women carrying placards were old friends of mine, and they were chanting for higher wages for Works Progress Administration artists and writers. It was not the kind of picket line that one was not supposed to cross, and as I started away from the door I heard my name shouted: —

"There's Wright, that goddamn Trotskyite!"

"We know you, you —!"

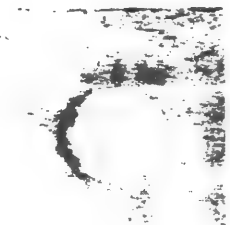
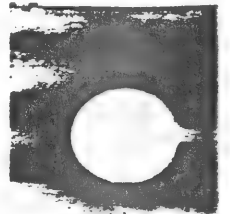
"Wright's a traitor!"

For a moment it seemed that I ceased to live. I had now reached that point where I was cursed aloud in the busy streets of America's second-largest city. It shook me as nothing else had.

Days passed. I continued on my job, where I functioned as the shop chairman of the union which I had helped to organize, though my election as shop chairman had been bitterly opposed by the party. In their efforts to nullify my influence in the union, my old comrades were willing to kill the union itself.

As May Day of 1936 approached, it was voted by the union membership that we should march in the public procession. On the morning of May Day I received printed instructions as to the time and place where our union contingent would assemble to join the parade. At noon I hurried to the spot and found that the parade was already in progress. In vain I searched for the banners of my union local. Where were they? I went up and down the streets, asking for the location of my local.

"Oh, that local's gone fifteen minutes ago," a



Negro told me. "If you're going to march, you'd better fall in somewhere."

I thanked him and walked through the milling crowds. Suddenly I heard my name called. I turned. To my left was the Communist Party's South Side section, lined up and ready to march.

"Come here!" an old party friend called to me.

I walked over to him.

"Aren't you marching today?" he asked me.

"I missed my union local," I told him.

"What the hell," he said. "March with us."

"I don't know," I said, remembering my last visit to the headquarters of the party, and my status as an "enemy."

"This is May Day," he said. "Get into the ranks."

"You know the trouble I've had," I said.

"That's nothing," he said. "Everybody's marching today."

"I don't think I'd better," I said, shaking my head.

"Are you scared?" he asked. "This is *May Day*."

He caught my right arm and pulled me into line beside him. I stood talking to him, asking him about his work, about common friends.

"Get out of our ranks!" a voice barked.

I turned. A white Communist, a leader of the district of the Communist Party, Cy Perry, a slender, close-cropped fellow, stood glaring at me.

"I — It's May Day and I want to march," I said.

"Get out!" he shouted.

"I was invited here," I said.

I turned to the Negro Communist who had invited me into the ranks. I did not want public violence. I looked at my friend. He turned his eyes away. He was afraid. I did not know what to do.

"You asked me to march here," I said to him.

He did not answer.

"Tell him that you did invite me," I said, pulling his sleeve.

"I'm asking you for the last time to get out of our ranks!" Cy Perry shouted.

I did not move. I had intended to, but I was beset by so many impulses that I could not act. Another white Communist came to assist Perry. Perry caught hold of my collar and pulled at me. I resisted. They held me fast. I struggled to free myself.

"Turn me loose!" I said.

Hands lifted me bodily from the sidewalk; I felt myself being pitched headlong through the air. I saved myself from landing on my head by clutching a curbstone with my hands. Slowly I rose and stood. Perry and his assistant were glaring at me. The rows of white and black Communists were look-

ing at me with cold eyes of non-recognition. I could not quite believe what had happened, even though my hands were smarting and bleeding. I had suffered a public, physical assault by two white Communists with black Communists looking on. I could not move from the spot. I was empty of any idea about what to do. But I did not feel belligerent. I had outgrown my childhood.

Suddenly, the vast ranks of the Communist Party began to move. Scarlet banners with the hammer and sickle emblem of world revolution were lifted, and they fluttered in the May breeze. Drums beat. Voices were chanting. The tramp of many feet shook the earth. A long line of set-faced men and women, white and black, flowed past me.

I followed the procession to the Loop and went into Grant Park Plaza and sat upon a bench. I was not thinking; I could not think. But an objectivity of vision was being born within me. A surging sweep of many odds and ends came together and formed an attitude, a perspective. "They're blind," I said to myself. "Their enemies have blinded them with too much oppression." I lit a cigarette and I heard a song floating out over the sunlit air: —

"Arise you pris'ners of starvation!"

I remembered the stories I had written, the stories in which I had assigned a role of honor and glory to the Communist Party, and I was glad that they were down in black and white, were finished. For I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again, should never be able to feel with that simple sharpness about life, should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith.

"A better world's in birth . . ."

The procession still passed. Banners still floated. Voices of hope still chanted.

I headed toward home alone, really alone now, telling myself that in all the sprawling immensity of our mighty continent the least-known factor of living was the human heart, the least-sought goal of being was a way to live a human life. Perhaps, I thought, out of my tortured feelings I could fling a spark into this darkness. I would try, not because I wanted to but because I felt that I had to if I were to live at all.

I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo; and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human.



IMAGINE YOUR GRANDMOTHER IN A POWER-DIVE !

ALL RIGHT. Maybe you can't get HER to set her foot inside of *any* high-speed contraption. And maybe you wouldn't want your car to do **EVERYTHING** a combat airplane does, BUT . . .

If and when the motor-makers design post-war cars that give aircraft performance, Texaco's post-war gasolines will be more than ready to match the new motors.

In developing these new gasolines, Texaco's Research scientists have attained new highs in octane ratings. Super-fuel concentrates more than *four times as powerful* as present-day 100 octane gasoline have

been produced in Texaco laboratories.

These concentrates are too powerful to be used efficiently alone in any existing motor. *But from their development and from other research comes Texaco's "know how" to make a more powerful gasoline for your post-war car.*

You can look forward to a gasoline streamlined and enriched with new-world power and smoothness . . . a fuel that will be more than a match for even the fine motors to come. A' better Sky Chief. Coming—at Texaco Dealers!

THE TEXAS COMPANY

COMING! A BETTER *Sky Chief* GASOLINE

... more than a match for your motor!



I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST

by RICHARD WRIGHT

1

ONE Thursday night I received an invitation from a group of white boys I had known when I was working in the post office to meet in one of Chicago's South Side hotels and argue the state of the world. About ten of us gathered, and ate salami sandwiches, drank beer, and talked. I was amazed to discover that many of them had joined the Communist Party. I challenged them by reciting the antics of the Negro Communists I had seen in the parks, and I was told that those antics were "tactics" and were all right. I was dubious.

Then one Thursday night Sol, a Jewish chap, startled us by announcing that he had had a short story accepted by a little magazine called the *Anvil*, edited by Jack Conroy, and that he had joined a revolutionary artist organization, the John Reed Club. Sol repeatedly begged me to attend the meetings of the club.

"You'd like them," Sol said.

"I don't want to be organized," I said.

"They can help you to write," he said.

"Nobody can tell me how or what to write," I said.

"Come and see," he urged. "What have you to lose?"

I felt that Communists could not possibly have a sincere interest in Negroes. I was cynical and I would rather have heard a white man say that he hated Negroes, which I could have readily believed, than to have heard him say that he respected Negroes, which would have made me doubt him.

One Saturday night, bored with reading, I decided to appear at the John Reed Club in the capacity of an amused spectator. I rode to the Loop and found the number. A dark stairway led upwards; it

did not look welcoming. What on earth of importance could happen in so dingy a place? Through the windows above me I saw vague murals along the walls. I mounted the stairs to a door that was lettered: THE CHICAGO JOHN REED CLUB.

I opened it and stepped into the strangest room I had ever seen. Paper and cigarette butts lay on the floor. A few benches ran along the walls, above which were vivid colors depicting colossal figures of workers carrying streaming banners. The mouths of the workers gaped in wild cries; their legs were sprawled over cities.

"Hello."

I turned and saw a white man smiling at me.

"A friend of mine, who's a member of this club, asked me to visit here. His name is Sol —," I told him.

"You're welcome here," the white man said. "We're not having an affair tonight. We're holding an editorial meeting. Do you paint?" He was slightly gray and he had a mustache.

"No," I said. "I try to write."

"Then sit in on the editorial meeting of our magazine, *Left Front*," he suggested.

"I know nothing of editing," I said.

"You can learn," he said.

I stared at him, doubting.

"I don't want to be in the way here," I said.

"My name's Grimm," he said.

I told him my name and we shook hands. He went to a closet and returned with an armful of magazines.

"Here are some back issues of the *Masses*," he said. "Have you ever read it?"

"No," I said.

"Some of the best writers in America publish in it," he explained. He also gave me copies of a magazine called *International Literature*. "There's stuff here from Gide, Gorky —"

I assured him that I would read them. He took me to an office and introduced me to a Jewish boy

RICHARD WRIGHT is an American Negro whose schooling carried him through the grammar grade and who has been educating himself ever since. His novel, *Native Son*, which was widely discussed in the year of its publication (1940), and his forthcoming autobiography, which will appear later this year, proclaim him as one of the most forthright and eloquent authors of his race. This is the first of two installments.

eral program for the club. Feelings waxed violent and bitter. Then the showdown came. I was informed that if I wanted to continue as secretary of the club I should have to join the Communist Party. I stated that I favored a policy that allowed for the development of writers and artists. My policy was accepted. I signed the membership card.

One night a Jewish chap appeared at one of our meetings and introduced himself as Comrade Young of Detroit. He told us that he was a member of the Communist Party, a member of the Detroit John Reed Club, that he planned to make his home in Chicago. He was a short, friendly, black-haired, well-read fellow with hanging lips and bulging eyes. Shy of forces to execute the demands of the Communist Party, we welcomed him. But I could not make out Young's personality; whenever I asked him a simple question, he looked off and stammered a confused answer. I decided to send his references to the Communist Party for checking and forthwith named him for membership in the club. He's O.K., I thought. Just a queer artist.

After the meeting Comrade Young confronted me with a problem. He had no money, he said, and asked if he could sleep temporarily on the club's premises. Believing him loyal, I gave him permission. Straightway Young became one of the most ardent members of our organization, admired by all. His paintings — which I did not understand — impressed our best artists. No report about Young had come from the Communist Party, but since Young seemed a conscientious worker, I did not think the omission serious in any case.

At a meeting one night Young asked that his name be placed upon the agenda; when his time came to speak, he rose and launched into one of the most violent and bitter political attacks in the club's history upon Swann, one of our best young artists. We were aghast. Young accused Swann of being a traitor to the workers, an opportunist, a collaborator with the police, and an adherent of Trotsky. Naturally most of the club's members assumed that Young, a member of the party, was voicing the ideas of the party. Surprised and baffled, I moved that Young's statement be referred to the executive committee for decision. Swann rightfully protested; he declared that he had been attacked in public and would answer in public.

It was voted that Swann should have the floor. He refuted Young's wild charges, but the majority of the club's members were bewildered, did not know whether to believe him or not. We all liked Swann, did not believe him guilty of any misconduct; but we did not want to offend the party. A verbal battle

ensued. Finally the members who had been silent in deference to the party rose and demanded of me that the foolish charges against Swann be withdrawn. Again I moved that the matter be referred to the executive committee, and again my proposal was voted down. The membership had now begun to distrust the party's motives. They were afraid to let an executive committee, the majority of whom were party members, pass upon the charges made by party member Young.

A delegation of members asked me later if I had anything to do with Young's charges. I was so hurt and humiliated that I disavowed all relations with Young. Determined to end the farce, I cornered Young and demanded to know who had given him authority to castigate Swann.

"I've been asked to rid the club of traitors."

"But Swann isn't a traitor," I said.

"We must have a purge," he said, his eyes bulging, his face quivering with passion.

I admitted his great revolutionary fervor, but I felt that his zeal was a trifle excessive. The situation became worse. A delegation of members informed me that if the charges against Swann were not withdrawn, they would resign in a body. I was frantic. I wrote to the Communist Party to ask why orders had been issued to punish Swann, and a reply came back that no such orders had been issued. Then what was Young up to? Who was prompting him? I finally begged the club to let me place the matter before the leaders of the Communist Party. After a violent debate, my proposal was accepted.

One night ten of us met in an office of a leader of the party to hear Young restate his charges against Swann. The party leader, aloof and amused, gave Young the signal to begin. Young unrolled a sheaf of papers and declaimed a list of political charges that excelled in viciousness his previous charges. I stared at Young, feeling that he was making a dreadful mistake, but fearing him because he had, by his own account, the sanction of high political authority.

When Young finished, the party leader asked, "Will you allow me to read these charges?"

"Of course," said Young, surrendering a copy of his indictment. "You may keep that copy. I have ten carbons."

"Why did you make so many carbons?" the leader asked.

"I didn't want anyone to steal them," Young said.

"If this man's charges against me are taken seriously," Swann said, "I'll resign and publicly denounce the club."

"You see!" Young yelled. "He's with the police!"

I was sick. The meeting ended with a promise from the party leader to read the charges carefully and render a verdict as to whether Swann should be placed on trial or not. I was convinced that something was wrong, but I could not figure it out. One afternoon I went to the club to have a long talk with Young; but when I arrived, he was not there. Nor was he there the next day. For a week I sought Young in vain. Meanwhile the club's members asked his whereabouts and they would not believe me when I told them that I did not know. Was he ill? Had he been picked up by the police?

One afternoon Comrade Grimm and I sneaked into the club's headquarters and opened Young's luggage. What we saw amazed and puzzled us. First of all, there was a scroll of paper twenty yards long — one page pasted to another — which had drawings depicting the history of the human race from a Marxist point of view. The first page read: *A Pictorial Record of Man's Economic Progress.*

"This is terribly ambitious," I said.

"He's very studious," Grimm said.

There were long dissertations written in long-hand; some were political and others dealt with the history of art. Finally we found a letter with a Detroit return address and I promptly wrote asking news of our esteemed member. A few days later a letter came which said in part: —

DEAR SIR:

In reply to your letter, we beg to inform you that Mr. Young, who was a patient in our institution and who escaped from our custody a few months ago, has been apprehended and returned to this institution for mental treatment.

I was thunderstruck. Was this true? Undoubtedly it was. Then what kind of club did we run that a lunatic could step into it and help run it? Were we all so mad that we could not detect a madman when we saw one?

I made a motion that all charges against Swann be dropped, which was done. I offered Swann an apology, but as the leader of the Chicago John Reed Club I was a sobered and chastened Communist.

4

THE Communist Party fraction in the John Reed Club instructed me to ask my party cell — or "unit," as it was called — to assign me to full duty in the work of the club. I was instructed to give my unit a report of my activities, writing, organizing, speaking. I agreed and wrote the report.

A unit, membership in which is obligatory for all Communists, is the party's basic form of organiza-

tion. Unit meetings are held on certain nights which are kept secret for fear of police raids. Nothing treasonable occurs at these meetings; but once one is a Communist, one does not have to be guilty of wrongdoing to attract the attention of the police.

I went to my first unit meeting — which was held in the Black Belt of the South Side — and introduced myself to the Negro organizer.

"Welcome, comrade," he said, grinning. "We're glad to have a writer with us."

"I'm not much of a writer," I said.

The meeting started. About twenty Negroes were gathered. The time came for me to make my report and I took out my notes and told them how I had come to join the party, what few stray items I had published, what my duties were in the John Reed Club. I finished and waited for comment. There was silence. I looked about. Most of the comrades sat with bowed heads. Then I was surprised to catch a twitching smile on the lips of a Negro woman. Minutes passed. The Negro woman lifted her head and looked at the organizer. The organizer smothered a smile. Then the woman broke into unrestrained laughter, bending forward and burying her face in her hands. I stared. Had I said something funny?

"What's the matter?" I asked.

The giggling became general. The unit organizer, who had been dallying with his pencil, looked up.

"It's all right, comrade," he said. "We're glad to have a writer in the party."

There was more smothered laughter. What kind of people were these? I had made a serious report and now I heard giggles.

"I did the best I could," I said uneasily. "I realize that writing is not basic or important. But, given time, I think I can make a contribution."

"We know you can, comrade," the black organizer said.

His tone was more patronizing than that of a Southern white man. I grew angry. I thought I knew these people, but evidently I did not. I wanted to take issue with their attitude, but caution urged me to talk it over with others first.

During the following days I learned through discreet questioning that I had seemed a fantastic element to the black Communists. I was shocked to hear that I, who had been only to grammar school, had been classified as an *intellectual*. What was an intellectual? I had never heard the word used in the sense in which it was applied to me. I had thought that they might refuse me on the ground that I was not politically advanced; I had thought they might say I would have to be investigated. But they had simply laughed.

I learned, to my dismay, that the black Communists in my unit had commented upon my shined shoes, my clean shirt, and the tie I had worn. Above all, my manner of speech had seemed an alien thing to them.

"He talks like a book," one of the Negro comrades had said. And that was enough to condemn me forever as bourgeois.

5

IN MY party work I met a Negro Communist, Ross, who was under indictment for "inciting to riot." Ross typified the effective street agitator. Southern-born, he had migrated north and his life reflected the crude hopes and frustrations of the peasant in the city. Distrustful but aggressive, he was a bundle of the weaknesses and virtues of a man struggling blindly between two societies, of a man living on the margin of a culture. I felt that if I could get his story I could make known some of the difficulties inherent in the adjustment of a folk people to an urban environment; I should make his life more intelligible to others than it was to himself.

I approached Ross and explained my plan. He was agreeable. He invited me to his home, introduced me to his Jewish wife, his young son, his friends. I talked to Ross for hours, explaining what I was about, cautioning him not to relate anything that he did not want to divulge.

"I'm after the things that made you a Communist," I said.

Word spread in the Communist Party that I was taking notes on the life of Ross, and strange things began to happen. A quiet black Communist came to my home one night and called me out to the street to speak to me in private. He made a prediction about my future that frightened me.

"Intellectuals don't fit well into the party, Wright," he said solemnly.

"But I'm not an intellectual," I protested. "I sweep the streets for a living." I had just been assigned by the relief system to sweep the streets for thirteen dollars a week.

"That doesn't make any difference," he said. "We've kept records of the trouble we've had with intellectuals in the past. It's estimated that only 13 per cent of them remain in the party."

"Why do they leave, since you insist upon calling me an intellectual?" I asked.

"Most of them drop out of their own accord."

"Well, I'm not dropping out," I said.

"Some are expelled," he hinted gravely.

"For what?"

"General opposition to the party's policies," he said.

"But I'm not opposing anything in the party."

"You'll have to prove your revolutionary loyalty."

"How?"

"The party has a way of testing people."

"Well, talk. What is this?"

"How do you react to police?"

"I don't react to them," I said. "I've never been bothered by them."

"Do you know Evans?" he asked, referring to a local militant Negro Communist.

"Yes. I've seen him; I've met him."

"Did you notice that he was injured?"

"Yes. His head was bandaged."

"He got that wound from the police in a demonstration," he explained. "That's proof of revolutionary loyalty."

"Do you mean that I must get whacked over the head by cops to prove that I'm sincere?" I asked.

"I'm not suggesting anything," he said. "I'm explaining."

"Look. Suppose a cop whacks me over the head and I suffer a brain concussion. Suppose I'm nuts after that. Can I write then? What shall I have proved?"

He shook his head. "The Soviet Union has had to shoot a lot of intellectuals," he said.

"Good God!" I exclaimed. "Do you know what you're saying? You're not in Russia. You're standing on a sidewalk in Chicago. You talk like a man lost in a fantasy."

"You've heard of Trotsky, haven't you?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Do you know what happened to him?"

"He was banished from the Soviet Union," I said.

"Do you know why?"

"Well," I stammered, trying not to reveal my ignorance of politics, for I had not followed the details of Trotsky's fight against the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, "it seems that after a decision had been made, he broke that decision by organizing against the party."

"It was for counter-revolutionary activity," he snapped impatiently; I learned afterwards that my answer had not been satisfactory, had not been couched in the acceptable phrases of bitter, anti-Trotsky denunciation.

"I understand," I said. "But I've never read Trotsky. What's his stand on minorities?"

"Why ask me?" he asked. "I don't read Trotsky."

"Look," I said. "If you found me reading Trotsky, what would that mean to you?"

"Comrade, you don't understand," he said in an annoyed tone.

That ended the conversation. But that was not the last time I was to hear the phrase: "Comrade, you don't understand." I had not been aware of holding wrong ideas. I had not read any of Trotsky's works; indeed, the very opposite had been true. It had been Stalin's *National and Colonial Question* that had captured my interest.

Of all the developments in the Soviet Union, the way scores of backward peoples had been led to unity on a national scale was what had enthralled me. I had read with awe how the Communists had sent phonetic experts into the vast regions of Russia to listen to the stammering dialects of peoples oppressed for centuries by the tsars. I had made the first total emotional commitment of my life when I read how the phonetic experts had given these tongueless people a language, newspapers, institutions. I had read how these forgotten folk had been encouraged to keep their old cultures, to see in their ancient customs meanings and satisfactions as deep as those contained in supposedly superior ways of living. And I had exclaimed to myself how different this was from the way in which Negroes were sneered at in America.

Then what was the meaning of the warning I had received from the black Communist? Why was I a suspected man because I wanted to reveal the vast physical and spiritual ravages of Negro life, the profundity latent in these rejected people, the dramas as old as man and the sun and the mountains and the seas that were taking place in the poverty of black America? What was the danger in showing the kinship between the sufferings of the Negro and the sufferings of other people?

6

I SAT one morning in Ross's home with his wife and child. I was scribbling furiously upon my yellow sheets of paper. The doorbell rang and Ross's wife admitted a black Communist, one Ed Green. He was tall, taciturn, soldierly, square-shouldered. I was introduced to him and he nodded stiffly.

"What's happening here?" he asked bluntly.

Ross explained my project to him, and as Ross talked I could see Ed Green's face darken. He had not sat down and when Ross's wife offered him a chair he did not hear her.

"What're you going to do with these notes?" he asked me.

"I hope to weave them into stories," I said.

"What're you asking the party members?"

"About their lives in general."

"Who suggested this to you?" he asked.

"Nobody. I thought of it myself."

"Were you ever a member of any other political group?"

"I worked with the Republicans once," I said.

"I mean, revolutionary organizations?" he asked.

"No. Why do you ask?"

"What kind of work do you do?"

"I sweep the streets for a living."

"How far did you go in school?"

"Through the grammar grades."

"You talk like a man who went further than that," he said.

"I've read books. I taught myself."

"I don't know," he said, looking off.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "What's wrong?"

"To whom have you shown this material?"

"I've shown it to no one yet."

What was the meaning of his questions? Naïvely I thought that he himself would make a good model for a biographical sketch.

"I'd like to interview you next," I said.

"I'm not interested," he snapped.

His manner was so rough that I did not urge him. He called Ross into a rear room. I sat feeling that I was guilty of something. In a few minutes Ed Green returned, stared at me wordlessly, then marched out.

"Who does he think he is?" I asked Ross.

"He's a member of the Central Committee," Ross said.

"But why does he act like that?"

"Oh, he's always like that," Ross said uneasily.

There was a long silence.

"He's wondering what you're doing with this material," Ross said finally.

I looked at him. He, too, had been captured by suspicion. He was trying to hide the fear in his face.

"You don't have to tell me anything you don't want to," I said.

That seemed to soothe him for a moment. But the seed of doubt had already been planted. I felt dizzy. Was I mad? Or were these people mad?

"You see, Dick," Ross's wife said, "Ross is under an indictment. Ed Green is the representative of the International Labor Defense for the South Side. It's his duty to keep track of the people he's trying to defend. He wanted to know if Ross has given you anything that could be used against him in court."

I was speechless.

"What does he think I am?" I demanded.

There was no answer.

"You lost people!" I cried, and banged my fist on the table.

Ross was shaken and ashamed. "Aw, Ed Green's just supercautious," he mumbled.

"Ross," I asked, "do you trust me?"

"Oh, yes," he said uneasily.

We two black men sat in the same room looking at each other in fear. Both of us were hungry. Both of us depended upon public charity to eat and for a place to sleep. Yet we had more doubt in our hearts of each other than of the men who had cast the mold of our lives.

I continued to take notes on Ross's life, but each successive morning found him more reticent. I pitied him and did not argue with him, for I knew that persuasion would not nullify his fears. Instead I sat and listened to him and his friends tell tales of Southern Negro experience, noting them down in my mind, not daring to ask questions for fear they would become alarmed.

In spite of their fears, I became drenched in the details of their lives. I gave up the idea of the biographical sketches and settled finally upon writing a series of short stories, using the material I had got from Ross and his friends, building upon it, inventing. I wove a tale of a group of black boys trespassing upon the property of a white man and the lynching that followed. The story was published in an anthology under the title of "Big Boy Leaves Home," but its appearance came too late to influence the Communists who were questioning the use to which I was putting their lives.

My fitful work assignments from the relief officials ceased and I looked for work that did not exist. I borrowed money to ride to and fro on the club's business. I found a cramped attic for my mother and aunt and brother behind some railroad tracks. At last the relief authorities placed me in the South Side Boys' Club and my wages were just enough to provide a bare living for my family.

Then political problems rose to plague me. Ross, whose life I had tried to write, was charged by the Communist Party with "anti-leadership tendencies," "class collaborationist attitudes," and "ideological factionalism" — phrases so fanciful that I gaped when I heard them. And it was rumored that I, too, would face similar charges. It was believed that I had been politically influenced by him.

One night a group of black comrades came to my house and ordered me to stay away from Ross.

"But why?" I demanded.

"He's an unhealthy element," they said. "Can't you accept a decision?"

"Is this a decision of the Communist Party?"

"Yes," they said.

"If I were guilty of something, I'd feel bound to keep your decision," I said. "But I've done nothing."

"Comrade, you don't understand," they said.

"Members of the party do not violate the party's decisions."

"But your decision does not apply to me," I said.

"I'll be damned if I'll act as if it does."

"Your attitude does not merit our trust," they said.

I was angry.

"Look," I exploded, rising and sweeping my arms at the bleak attic in which I lived. "What is it here that frightens you? You know where I work. You know what I earn. You know my friends. Now, what in God's name is wrong?"

They left with mirthless smiles which implied that I would soon know what was wrong.

But there was relief from these shadowy political bouts. I found my work in the South Side Boys' Club deeply engrossing. Each day black boys between the ages of eight and twenty-five came to swim, draw, and read. They were a wild and homeless lot, culturally lost, spiritually disinherited, candidates for the clinics, morgues, prisons, reformatories, and the electric chair of the state's death house. For hours I listened to their talk of planes, women, guns, politics, and crime. Their figures of speech were as forceful and colorful as any ever used by English-speaking people. I kept pencil and paper in my pocket to jot down their word-rhythms and reactions. These boys did not fear people to the extent that every man looked like a spy. The Communists who doubted my motives did not know these boys, their twisted dreams, their all too clear destinies; and I doubted if I should ever be able to convey to them the tragedy I saw here.

7

PARTY duties broke into my efforts at expression. The club decided upon a conference of all the left-wing writers in the Middle West. I supported the idea and argued that the conference should deal with craft problems. My arguments were rejected. The conference, the club decided, would deal with political questions. I asked for a definition of what was expected from the writers — books or political activity. Both, was the answer. Write a few hours a day and march on the picket line the other hours.

The conference convened with a leading Communist attending as adviser. The question debated

was: What does the Communist Party expect from the club? The answer of the Communist leader ran from organizing to writing novels. I argued that either a man organized or he wrote novels. The party leader said that both must be done. The attitude of the party leader prevailed and *Left Front*, for which I had worked so long, was voted out of existence.

I knew now that the club was nearing its end, and I rose and stated my gloomy conclusions, recommending that the club dissolve. My "defeatism," as it was called, brought upon my head the sharpest disapproval of the party leader. The conference ended with the passing of a multitude of resolutions dealing with China, India, Germany, Japan, and conditions afflicting various parts of the earth. But not one idea regarding writing had emerged.

The ideas I had expounded at the conference were linked with the suspicions I had roused among the Negro Communists on the South Side, and the Communist Party was now certain that it had a dangerous enemy in its midst. It was whispered that I was trying to lead a secret group in opposition to the party. I had learned that denial of accusations was useless. It was now painful to meet a Communist, for I did not know what his attitude would be.

Following the conference, a national John Reed Club congress was called. It convened in the summer of 1934 with left-wing writers attending from all states. But as the sessions got under way there was a sense of looseness, bewilderment, and dissatisfaction among the writers, most of whom were young, eager, and on the verge of doing their best work. No one knew what was expected of him, and out of the congress came no unifying idea.

As the congress drew to a close, I attended a caucus to plan the future of the clubs. Ten of us met in a Loop hotel room, and to my amazement the leaders of the clubs' national board confirmed my criticisms of the manner in which the clubs had been conducted. I was excited. Now, I thought, the clubs will be given a new lease on life.

Then I was stunned when I heard a nationally known Communist announce a decision to dissolve the clubs. Why? I asked. Because the clubs do not serve the new People's Front policy, I was told. That can be remedied; the clubs can be made healthy and broad, I said. No; a bigger and better organization must be launched, one in which the leading writers of the nation could be included, they said. I was informed that the People's Front policy was now the correct vision of life and that the clubs could no longer exist. I asked what was to become of the young writers whom the Communist Party

had implored to join the clubs and who were ineligible for the new group, and there was no answer. "This thing is cold!" I exclaimed to myself. To effect a swift change in policy, the Communist Party was dumping one organization, then organizing a new scheme with entirely new people!

I found myself arguing alone against the majority opinion and then I made still another amazing discovery. I saw that even those who agreed with me would not support me. At that meeting I learned that when a man was informed of the wish of the party he submitted, even though he knew with all the strength of his brain that the wish was not a wise one, was one that would ultimately harm the party's interests.

It was not courage that made me oppose the party. I simply did not know any better. It was inconceivable to me, though bred in the lap of Southern hate, that a man could not have his say. I had spent a third of my life traveling from the place of my birth to the North just to talk freely, to escape the pressure of fear. And now I was facing fear again.

Before the congress adjourned, it was decided that another congress of American writers would be called in New York the following summer, 1935. I was lukewarm to the proposal and tried to make up my mind to stand alone, write alone. I was already afraid that the stories I had written would not fit into the new, official mood. Must I discard my plot-ideas and seek new ones? No. I could not. My writing was my way of seeing, my way of living, my way of feeling; and who could change his sight, his sense of direction, his senses?

8

THE spring of 1935 came and the plans for the writers' congress went on apace. For some obscure reason — it might have been to "save" me — I was urged by the local Communists to attend and I was named as a delegate. I got time off from my job at the South Side Boys' Club and, along with several other delegates, hitchhiked to New York.

We arrived in the early evening and registered for the congress sessions. The opening mass meeting was being held at Carnegie Hall. I asked about housing accommodations, and the New York John Reed Club members, all white members of the Communist Party, looked embarrassed. I waited while one white Communist called another white Communist to one side and discussed what could be done to get me, a black Chicago Communist, housed. During the trip I had not thought of my-

self as a Negro; I had been mulling over the problems of the young left-wing writers I knew. Now, as I stood watching one white comrade talk frantically to another about the color of my skin, I felt disgusted. The white comrade returned.

"Just a moment, comrade," he said to me. "I'll get a place for you."

"But haven't you places already?" I asked. "Matters of this sort are ironed out in advance."

"Yes," he admitted in an intimate tone. "We have some addresses here, but we don't know the people. You understand?"

"Yes, I understand," I said, gritting my teeth.

"But just wait a second," he said, touching my arm to reassure me. "I'll find something."

"Listen, don't bother," I said, trying to keep anger out of my voice.

"Oh, no," he said, shaking his head determinedly.

"This is a problem and I'll solve it."

"It oughtn't to be a problem," I could not help saying.

"Oh, I didn't mean that," he caught himself.

I cursed under my breath. Several people standing near-by observed the white Communist trying to find a black Communist a place to sleep. I burned with shame. A few minutes later the white Communist returned, frantic-eyed, sweating.

"Did you find anything?" I asked.

"No, not yet," he said, panting. "Just a moment. I'm going to call somebody I know. Say, give me a nickel for the phone."

"Forget it," I said. My legs felt like water. "I'll find a place. But I'd like to get my suitcase somewhere until after the meeting tonight."

"Do you really think you can find a place?" he asked, trying to keep a note of desperate hope out of his voice.

"Of course I can," I said.

He was still uncertain. He wanted to help me, but he did not know how. He locked my bag in a closet and I stepped to the sidewalk wondering where I would sleep that night. I stood on the sidewalks of New York with a black skin and practically no money, absorbed, not with the burning questions of the left-wing literary movement in the United States, but with the problem of how to get a bath. I presented my credentials at Carnegie Hall. The building was jammed with people. As I listened to the militant speeches, I found myself wondering why in hell I had come.

I went to the sidewalk and stood studying the faces of the people. I met a Chicago club member.

"Didn't you find a place yet?" he asked.

"No," I said. "I'd like to try one of the hotels,

but, God, I'm in no mood to argue with a hotel clerk about my color."

"Oh, hell, wait a minute," he said.

He scooted off. He returned in a few moments with a big, heavy white woman. He introduced us.

"You can sleep in my place tonight," she said.

I walked with her to her apartment and she introduced me to her husband. I thanked them for their hospitality and went to sleep on a cot in the kitchen. I got up at six, dressed, tapped on their door, and bade them good-bye. I went to the sidewalk, sat on a bench, took out pencil and paper, and tried to jot down notes for the argument I wanted to make in defense of the John Reed Clubs. But the problem of the clubs did not seem important. What did seem important was: Could a Negro ever live halfway like a human being in this goddamn country?

That day I sat through the congress sessions, but what I heard did not touch me. That night I found my way to Harlem and walked pavements filled with black life. I was amazed, when I asked passers-by, to learn that there were practically no hotels for Negroes in Harlem. I kept walking. Finally I saw a tall, clean hotel; black people were passing the doors and no white people were in sight. Confidently I entered and was surprised to see a white clerk behind the desk. I hesitated.

"I'd like a room," I said.

"Not here," he said.

"But isn't this Harlem?" I asked.

"Yes, but this hotel is for white only," he said.

"Where is a hotel for colored?"

"You might try ~~the~~ Y," he said.

Half an hour later I found the Negro Young Men's Christian Association, that bulwark of Jim Crowism for young black men, got a room, took a bath, and slept for twelve hours. When I awakened, I did not want to go to the congress. I lay in bed thinking, "I've got to go it alone . . . I've got to learn how again . . ."

I dressed and attended the meeting that was to make the final decision to dissolve the clubs. It started briskly. A New York Communist writer summed up the history of the clubs and made a motion for their dissolution. Debate started and I rose and explained what the clubs had meant to young writers and begged for their continuance. I sat down amid silence. Debate was closed. The vote was called. The room filled with uplifted hands to dissolve. Then came a call for those who disagreed and my hand went up alone. I knew that my stand would be interpreted as one of opposition to the Communist Party, but I thought: "The hell with it."

(To be continued)

THE

SEPTEMBER 1944

Atlantic

CONTENTS

THE ATLANTIC REPORT — ON THE WORLD TODAY

- A Letter to Governor Dewey . . . GERALD W. JOHNSON 39
European Twilight. A Poem LEONARD BACON 42
Who Reforms the Criminal? . JUDGE JOHN F. PERKINS 44
I Tried to Be a Communist RICHARD WRIGHT 48
Reading and Meditating. Poems
JAMES NORMAN HALL 57
There Is Time Yet. *Freedom of the Press*
RALPH MCGILL 61
Book Publishing in Russia. *Books and Men*
ROBERT MAGIDOFF 66
Where the Wild Boars Used to Drink . . . ANNE GREEN 70
The Kampong. *That Vanishing Eden*
THOMAS BARBOUR 77
Lost Child. A Story CLARA LAIDLAW 81
Mark Twain: Business Man
SAMUEL CHARLES WEBSTER 90
The Stepchild Puerto Rico RICHARD PATTEE 97
Thought on Living: James Hilton — Betty Hicks — Christopher
Rey — Lt. Com. Nicholas Monsarrat, R.N.V.R. — Howard Hayes
"The Listener"

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

269882 DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1AG/C

SEPTEMBER 1944

THE

Atlantic

**A LETTER TO GOVERNOR DEWEY . Gerald Johnson**

Dewey is a fighter. That we know. But have his lieutenants and the Republican Party back of him the determination to give this country the constructive peace which Harding never gave us?

BOOK PUBLISHING IN RUSSIA . . . Robert Magidoff

NBC'S famous commentator in Moscow has written the inside story of Russian authors and publishers.

WHO REFORMS THE CRIMINAL? Judge John F. Perkins

How much can we do to cure the criminal? How much can we rely on discipline and reason?

THE PRESS CAN STILL BE FREE Ralph McGill

The fighting Editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, one of the great liberals of the South, has this to say about our newspapers.

THE ATLANTIC REPORT on the WORLD TODAY

European Front—Washington Report

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 12/29/88 BY QP1A3

289882

COMPLETE TABLE OF CONTENTS FACING PAGE 70

BUY A WAR BOND - TODAY

 The ATLANTIC is proud of its

Yes, the ATLANTIC has good reason to be proud
invariably become best sellers the moment they
form.

What books have recently appeared FIRST in
LANTIC? Just glance below:—

- YANKEE FROM OLYMPUS Ga
- IS GERMANY INCURABLE? Ric
- ROUGHLY SPEAKING Lo
- INDIGO Ch
- THE LITTLE LOCKSMITH Ka
- THE YEAR OF DECISION Be
- THEY SHALL NOT HAVE ME Jer
- CROSS CREEK Ma
- WE TOOK TO THE WOODS Lo
- ANGEL MO' AND HER SON: ROLAND
HAYES Ma
- ACCUSTOMED AS I AM Joh
- THE WORLD OF WASHINGTON
IRVING Van
(Now running)

AUGUST 1944

THE

Atlantic

**POLICING GERMANY BY AIR . . . Allan A. Michie**

People ask how we can prevent it from happening again. But this time we could have an Allied Air Police that Germany can't fool. Here's how it works.

READING YOUR MIND Dunninger

This "mind reader" has a spectacular effect on his radio audiences. To those who remain skeptical or mystified, he explains that the answer is simple telepathy.

WHAT TO DO WITH BAD BOYS . . . A Symposium

Social workers, psychologists, judges, parents, and the heads of parole boards have tried to reach an agreement about the Individual Treatment of juvenile delinquents.

I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST . . . Richard Wright

One of the most eloquent of Negro authors tells the truth of his experience as a writer in the Party ranks.

THE ATLANTIC REPORT on the WORLD TODAY

European Front—Washington Report

The Pacific War—Latin America

COMPLETE TABLE OF CONTENTS FACING PAGE 70

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 12/29/88 BY SP

289882

BUY A WAR BOND - TODAY



The ATLANTIC is proud of its SERIAL

Yes, the ATLANTIC has good reason to be proud of it
invariably become best sellers the moment they are re-
form.

What books have recently appeared FIRST in the pa-
LANTIC? Just glance below:—

- YANKEE FROM OLYMPUS . . . Catherine
- IS GERMANY INCURABLE? . . . Richard M.
- ROUGHLY SPEAKING . . . Louise Pier
- INDIGO . . . Christine W.
- THE LITTLE LOCKSMITH . . . Katharine
- THE YEAR OF DECISION . . . Bernard De
- THEY SHALL NOT HAVE ME . . . Jean Hélio
- CROSS CREEK . . . Marjorie K
- WE TOOK TO THE WOODS . . . Louise Dic
- ANGEL MO' AND HER SON: ROLAND
HAYES . . . MacKinley
- ACCUSTOMED AS I AM . . . John Maso
- THE WORLD OF WASHINGTON
IRVING . . . Van Wyck
(Now running)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY 051 AFS

THE

Atlantic

CONTENTS

THE ATLANTIC REPORT — ON THE WORLD TODAY

Policing Germany by Air	ALLAN A. MICHIE	39
What to Do with Bad Boys	A SYMPOSIUM	45
Reading Your Mind	DUNNINGER	53
Was This Romance?	GRETCHEN FINLETTER	57
I Tried to Be a Communist	RICHARD WRIGHT	61
Mark Twain: Business Man	SAMUEL CHARLES WEBSTER	71
Preface. <i>A Poem</i>	W. H. AUDEN	78
<u>Freedom of the Press</u>		
Slanting the News	MICHAEL BRADSHAW	79
In Defense of the Press	ARTHUR BERNON TOURTELLOT	83
First Day Finish. <i>A Story</i>	JESSAMYN WEST	88
Courage	H. M. TOMLINSON	93
The Florida Ditches. <i>That Vanishing Eden</i>	THOMAS BARBOUR	99
Unlucky Soldier. <i>A Poem</i>	MAY SARTON	102
Accent on Living: Elliot Paul — Barbara Stewart, David Jacobus, Russell Maloney — B. F. Sylvester — Padraic Colum — Patrick Morgan — Lewis Nurdyke — Joyce Horner		103

- 1. Two photos of RICHARD WRIGHT with neg. Indexed. Sub'm. by SA [redacted] Obt'd. from DM.
- 2. An article from the Atlantic Monthly Oct. Aug. 1944 entitled "I tried to be a Communist". See Ser. 29.
- 3. An article from the Atlantic Monthly Oct. Aug. 1944 entitled "I tried to be a Communist". See Ser. 29.
- 4. Eight prints and one neg. of subj. Richard Wright. Indexed.
- 5. One photo of Richard Wright, 1941. Obt'd. from unknown source. Sub'm. by SA [redacted] 2/16/45. Indexed.
- 6. [redacted]
- 7. SI card of subj. See Ser. 44.

ABOVE RETIRED FROM ENVELOPE BLOCKSTAMPED OCT. 2, 1946

9. 4/17/50. Neg & 5 photos of Richard Wright. [redacted]

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/29/88 BY SP1AG
289882

WRIGHT, R. 32

100-112001-100

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET5

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7c, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-64

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 33

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC, NEW YORK (100-41674)

DATE: 2/20/58

FROM : SA, [REDACTED] b7C

SUBJECT: RICHARD WRIGHT
SM - C

b7C
b7D

[REDACTED]

mdly
SR

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1AG/PC

1 - NY 100-41674)

[REDACTED] b7C
(1)

100-41674-61

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
FEB 20 1958	
FBI - NEW YORK	

b7C

WRIGHT, R. 34

20

Letter to the SAC, NY
NY [REDACTED]

b2, b7c

EDWIN SELVEN - Subject testified in relation to this person that he did not remember him as being connected with the Writers' School, but remembers that he was connected with the L.L.O. Subject also testified that he did not know that SELVEN was a Communist.

ROBERT WOOD - Subject testified in relation to this person that, while he, JILLIN, was teaching at Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas, the summer of 1937, WOOD was a guest lecturer at this school for about a week. Subject also testified that WOOD was a Communist organizer in the State of Oklahoma.

LEONARD CLAUDE WILLIAMS - Subject testified in relation to this person that he, WILLIAMS, was the Director of the Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansas, during the summer of 1937.

BERNICE OPPENHEIM WEIN - Subject testified in relation to this person that she is his wife, and that she became a member of the CP at the same time he did, early 1938.

Letter to the SAC, NY
NY [REDACTED]

62,672

NEWSPAPER GUILD OF NY - Subject testified that he has been a member of this group since its inception in 1933.

MILTON KLUFTIN - Subject testified that this person and another person, unnamed and now deceased, recruited his wife and himself into the CP during the year 1938. Subject also testified that he attended a "meeting of Communist Party members of the NEWSPAPER GUILD and some other sympathizers, fellow travelers, or trusted person, friends of Party members who would be invited to the meeting". Subject testified that KLUFTIN was, "on the platform. I believe he was presiding." KLUFTIN testified that this meeting was held at the Roosevelt Hotel, NY, and that about 50 persons attended.

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN WRITERS - Subject testified that he taught "Labor Journalism" at a "Writers' School", operated by the L.A.W. for two terms of about 10 weeks each in either 1938 or 1939. Subject testified in answer to a question if he knew of any "known Communist connected with the courses at the Writers' School?", that "to the best of my knowledge now, I did not know that any teacher in the school was a Communist, nor did I care, frankly."

ALFRED ALMAYET - Subject testified in relation to this person that he did not know "whether he was connected with the school. He was connected with the L.A.W., surely." Subject testified that he did not know ALMAYET as a Communist.

RICHARD WRIGHT - Subject testified in relation to this person that he did not know his connection with the Writers' School, but that WRIGHT was connected with L.A.W. Subject testified that he did not know WRIGHT as a Communist.

MYRA PAGE - Subject testified in relation to this person that she was a teacher at the Writers' School. Subject also testified that he does not remember knowing her.

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: SAC, NEW YORK [REDACTED]

DATE: 11/1/55

FROM: SA [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED]

SM-C

On 7/14/55, Mr. HERBERT FLEMMING testified, under oath, before a public hearing of the US Senate Subcommittee to Investigate the Administration of the Internal Security Act and other Internal Security Laws of the Committee of the Judiciary.

A copy of FLEMMING's testimony before this committee was furnished the NYO as an enclosure with a letter from the Director, FBI, dated 9/1/55. This record has been made a part of the 11 section of subject's file.

This record reflects, in part, the following:

NEW YORK FILES - Subject testified that he has been employed continuously for this paper since February, 1928, with the exception of two years in the military service. Subject also admitted membership in the so-called "Times Group" of the CP from early 1938, to sometime in 1939, for a one year period.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/22/82 BY SP1A3SC

289582

(12)

WRIGHT, R. 37

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC New York (100-41674) (12-16)

DATE: 6/15/55

FROM : SA [REDACTED]

b7C

SUBJECT: Richard Wright
SM-C

**b7C
b7D**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1 AJS

100-41674-59

SEARCHED.....	INDEXED.....
SERIALIZED.....	FILED.....
JUN 24 1955	
FBI - NEW YORK	

[Signature]

WRIGHT, R. 38

21



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
American Embassy
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~

Date: February 13, 1959
To: Director, FBI
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

11-

bl

b7D

Re Paris letter 11/21/58. J

[REDACTED]

RUC.

CLASS. & EXT. BY... *SPB/bue*
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2... *1,3*
DATE OF REVIEW... *8-25-81*

2 - Bureau
1 - Paris
CM
(3)

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE *6-9-77*

Classified by *2040*
Exempt from GDS Category
Date of Declassification Indefinite
8-25-81

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE *05-18-81* BY *SPB/bue*

52 FEB 27 1959

REC-33
FEB 50 5 50 PM '59

100-157464-46

FEB 20 1959

SUBV CONTROL

WRIGHT, R. 39

166

b7c

Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)

February 19, 1959

Director, FBI (100-157464)

CLASS. & EXT. BY *84Y Blyth*
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-91*
8-25-81

RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

CONFIDENTIAL

Reurlet 11-21-58.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**b1
b7D**

[REDACTED]

1 - Foreign Liaison Unit (route through for review)

NOTE ON YELLOW:

Wright's Security Index card canceled 1948. Self-admitted member of CP approximately 1932 to 1944. Has lived in Paris since 1946. Author of well-known books "Black Boy" and "Native Son," which decry treatment of Negroes in both South and North. Has publicized his break with the CP but alleged to retain some of his previous sympathies.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

- Tolson _____
- Belmont _____
- Mohr _____
- Nease _____
- Parsons _____
- Rosen _____
- Tamm _____
- Trotter _____
- W.C. Sullivan _____
- Tele. Room _____
- Holloman _____
- Gandy _____

fbm
(6)

LEGAT
9 - FEB 20
COMM - FBI

CONFIDENTIAL REC-58

100-157464-47

25 FEB 25 1959

67 MAR 2 - 1959

MAIL ROOM ☐ TELETYPE UNIT ☐

WRIGHT, R. 40

*1008
902
16*

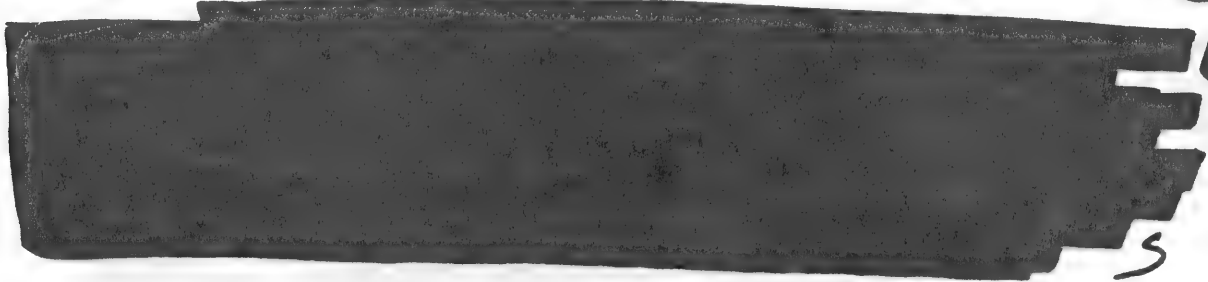


THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

American Embassy
Paris 8, France

Date: February 26, 1959
To: Director, FBI (100-157464)
From: Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

ReBulet 2/19/59 and Paris let 2/13/59.



RUC

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

2 - Bureau Classified by 240
1 - Paris exempt from GDS Category 1
(3) :AM Date of Declassification Indefinite
gm 6-9-77

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF 2040
DATE 6-9-77

CLASS. & EXT BY SP8 BTJ/bee REC-91
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

2 MAR 2 1959

5 33 6H 23

BOUCH WYIF

52 MAR 5 1959

SURV CONTROL

WRIGHT, R. 4A

169



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

DATE AGENCIES

SLIP (S) *Declassify*
DATE *2/8/80*

American Embassy
Paris 8, France

CONFIDENTIAL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

Date: February 11, 1960

To: Director, FBI (100-157464)

From: Legat, Paris (100-697)

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SM - C

CLASS. EXT. BY *SP6 bja*
REASON - FCIM II
DATE OF REVIEW *2-25-81*

DECLASSIFIED BY *2/5/82*

Reference Paris Office letter to Director 2/26/59.

On 1/21/60, Headquarters, United States Army Communications Zone Europe (USACOMZEUR), Office of the Director of Security, furnished the Paris Office with a report captioned "Possible Subversives Among US Personnel in France" dated 1/18/60. This report contains a summary of information developed by the above agency in the course of a security investigation of [REDACTED] Bufile [REDACTED]

b7C per Army

b2, b7C

[REDACTED]

*b7C
b7D
per
Army*

b2

[REDACTED]

*4 b7C
per
Army*

5 FEB 19 1960
Bureau (1 - New York)
1 - Paris
1 - [REDACTED]
(4)

CONFIDENTIAL

REC-20

100-157464-49

5 FEB 15 1960

b7C

Xerox made sent to Legat, Paris with Paris let.

See note attached to it: 6B/gdu

b7C

WRIGHT, R. 42

169

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1 with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☒ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
100-157464-51

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 47

Richard Wright Dies in Paris; American Negro Author, 52

American Negro author Richard Wright, 52, has died of a heart attack in Paris. Death came to the Mississippi-born writer Mon-

day night. A longtime Paris resident, he is best known for his novels, such as "Black Boy" and "The Outsider," dealing with the problem of the Negro in American society.

He had suffered recently from intestinal trouble and was hospitalized Saturday for treatment.

His latest work, published by Julliard just a few weeks ago, dealt with the theme he spent a lifetime exploring. Titled "Fishbelly," the book traces the impact of American racial attitudes upon the Negro.

Mr. Wright was born near Natchez, Miss., on Sept. 4, 1908. He attended a Seventh Day Adventist school near his home but quit and went to work in Memphis, Tenn., at the age of 15.

From Memphis

From Memphis, he drifted to Chicago, where he worked at odd jobs.

His first writing was done during the depression under the auspices of the Federal Writers Project, first in Chicago in 1935 and then in New York in 1937.

He began contributing articles and stories to small literary magazines. He first attracted national attention with "Uncle Tom's Children" in 1938.

"Native Son," published in 1940, established him as one of the foremost American contemporary authors.

New York Herald
Tribune
European Edition
Paris, France
11/30/60

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-10/1/81

WRIGHT, R. 48

100-157464-10

174

29221

SECRET

May 9, 1963

#14258

REC-13

100-157464-51

**RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
EDWARD MARGOLIES**

- 1 - Mr. WC Sullivan
- 1 - Name Check Section
- 1 - Mr. Stefansson

EX-114

[REDACTED]

According to newspaper articles, Richard Wright, who appears to be identical with Richard Nathaniel Wright, born on September 4, 1908, a renowned American Negro author died as a result of a heart attack in Paris, France, on November 29, 1960. (100-157464)

[REDACTED]

1 - London

1 - Foreign Liaison Unit (detached)

NOTE:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Tolson _____
Belmont _____
Mohr _____
Casper _____
Callahan _____
Conrad _____
DeLoach _____
Evans _____
Gale _____
Rosen _____
Sullivan _____
Tavel _____
Trotter _____
Tele. Room _____

MAILED FROM DIVISION FIVE

MAY 10 1963

CLASS. BY SP-8 BJS/bcf

SECRET

RECORDED COPY FILED IN

b1
b7c

b

176

WRIGHT
49

190-24457-23

Tolson ☒
 Boardman ☒
 Belmont ☒
 Mohr ☒
 Nease ☒
 Parsons ☒
 Rosen ☒
 Tamm ☒
 Trotter ☒
 Clayton ☒
 Tele. Room ☒
 Holloman ☒
 Gandy ☒

White Man Is Intrusive

Reviewed by Carl F. Stover

Political Scientist With the Brookings Institution

WHITE MAN, LISTEN! By Richard Wright. Doubleday, \$3.

THOSE WHO need to read this book will probably not do so, because it is written by a Negro. Those who do read it may not like it, especially if they are inclined to feel that everything said about social problems must be constructive. For this is a bitter and vituperative book, "explosive and blatantly unacademic."

Richard Wright comments ardently on white-colored relations in the world, dealing principally with the psychological impact of white men's intrusions on colored peoples. Whether they came as missionaries, businessmen or conquerors, Wright argues, they have helped to undermine the cultures of Africa and Asia.

Thus, the colored man has been alienated from his own, while he is also prevented from becoming a part of the white culture around him. He remains the true

outsider, living in two worlds, and able to believe in neither.

No solutions or plans of action are presented. Wright contends that "we all, deep in our hearts, know exactly what to do, though most of us would rather die than do it." Who can say that he is wrong?

To those familiar with Wright's work, this book will have a familiar, personal ring. Perhaps more than the plight of the world's colored peoples, it reflects his own plight as a talented and sensitive American Negro. Reading it, one is mindful of his closing words in an earlier essay:

"I would hurl words into this darkness and wait for an echo; and if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would send other words to tell, to march, to fight, to create a sense of the hunger for life that grows in us all to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human."

INDEXED-22

INDEXED EX-117
 62-101087-A
 133 JAN 14 1958

Wash. Post and Times Herald ☒
 Wash. News ☒
 Wash. Star ☒
 N. Y. Herald Tribune ☒
 N. Y. Journal-American ☒
 N. Y. Mirror ☒
 N. Y. Daily News ☒
 N. Y. Times ☒
 Daily Worker ☒
 The Worker ☒
 New Leader ☒

Date REC 26 1957

62 JAN 15 1958

WRIGHT, R. 50

17

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/pc
(297,812)

(Title) RICHARD WRIGHT

(File No) 100-15433*

1. Photo of subj. (Filed 4-10-58 by krb.)

67C

Disposition:

100-15433-1A

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
APR 10 1958	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

WRIGHT, R
52

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SPIAG/jac

File No. 100-15433-1A.1

Date Received 4-2-58

From PASSPORT OFFICE
(Name of Contributor)

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
(Address of Contributor)

By [REDACTED] **b7c**
(Name of Special Agent)

To Be Returned Yes ()
No (X)

Description:

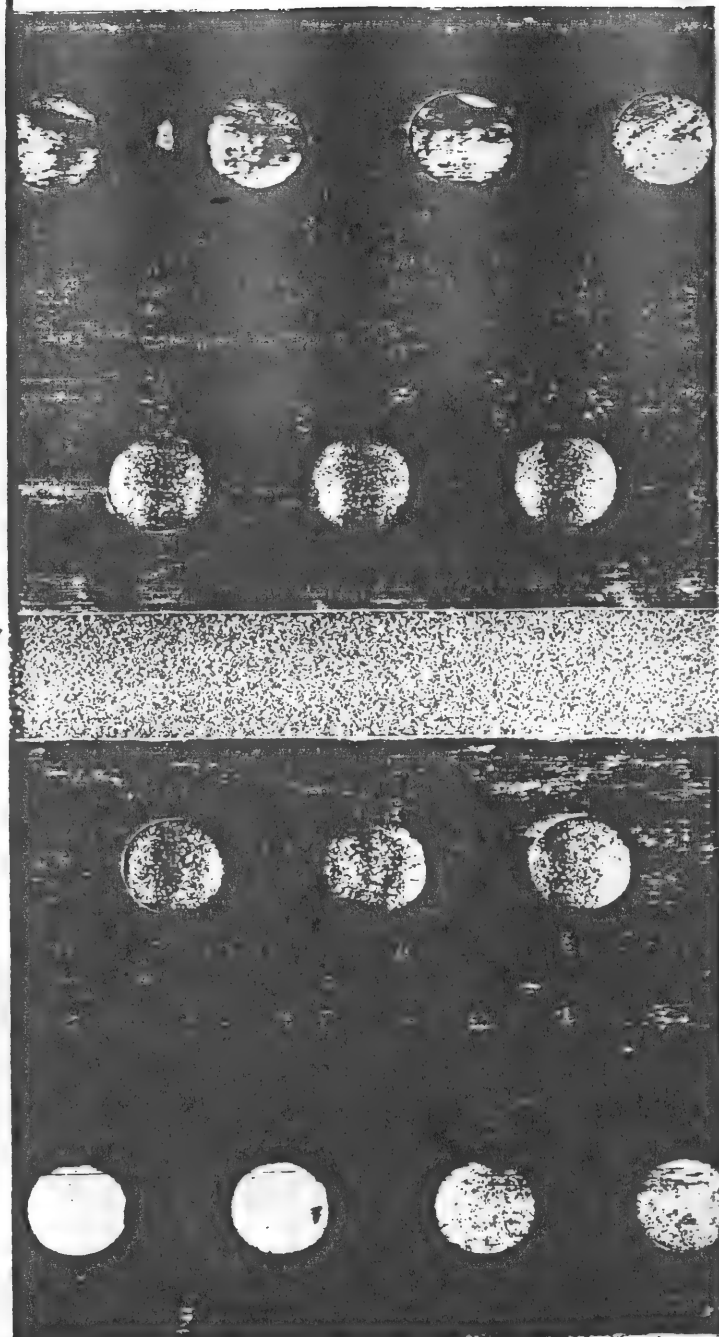
~~1~~ PHOTO OF RICHARD

WRIGHT [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] **b7c**

(1)
1142

WRIGHT, R. 53



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/jac



WRIGHT, R. 54

187

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**

COMPLAINT FORM

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/pe

RICHARD WRIGHT
Subject's Name and Aliases

C324
Name of Complainant

Address of Complainant

Address of Subject
Security Matter - C
Character of Case

Telephone Number of Complainant
1-24-44

Date and Time Complaint Received

FACTS OF COMPLAINT:

No main file on subject, but see following references:

b2

b7C

(If additional space needed use reverse side)

ACTION RECOMMENDED BY AGENT:

Open case

DISPOSITION BY SAG:

Open New Case:

Assign to Agent

Assign to P.D.

Defer

Route to Agent

No Action Necessary:

File In

Special Agent

Special Agent in Charge or
Supervisor

WRIGHT, R. 56

185

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET2-

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7C with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

WFO 100-15433-1A2

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 55

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC, WFO (100-15433)

DATE: 3/6/58

FROM : SA [REDACTED]

b7cSUBJECT: RICHARD WRIGHT
SM-C
(OO:NY)ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/jac

On 3/6/58, the Passport Officer, Dept. of State, made available the subject's passport file. It indicated the subject was born 9/4/08 at Natchez, Miss.

The file had Thermofax copies of FBI reports by the WFO and New York offices.

The subject, on 2/13/58, executed an affidavit in which he admitted CP membership from 1932 to 1942. He is in Paris, France at the present time.

It is suggested that the subject's case be opened and assigned in order that all pertinent information may be obtained. The file is now available.

RIO + Aarnu

100-15433-5

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAR - 7 1958	
FBI - WASH. F. O.	

b7c

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.**

100-157464

January 20, 1943

Special Agent in Charge
New York, New York

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY - SEDITION

Dear Sir:

The Bureau desires that it be advised as to
the exact status of this case at the present time.

Very truly yours,

J. E. Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289-582
DATE 12-19-88 BY OPIA/BSC

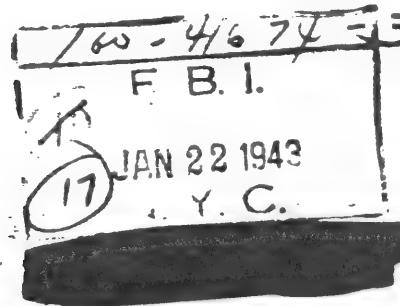
FOR DEFENSE



BUY
UNITED
STATES
SAVINGS
BONDS

*Admiral Ben. Case assigned
report will be submitted
as soon as possible*

b7c



b7c

WRIGHT, R. 60

190

WRIGHT, Richard
New York City

(CONFIDENTIAL)
(Evaluation TRUE)

3ND

Subject's name appears on a list of
sponsors of the Citizens' Non-Partisan
Committee to elect Benjamin J. DAVIS, Jr.,
Communist Party candidate for the New York
City Council from Manhattan.

ONI-FBI-MID 25C
11-15-43

Copy for B7-A

B7-CP

FBI
b2, b7C

100-41674

(num refs)

Declassified/.....
Auth: COMNISC
Date: 2-10-89 Unit: OOJ

100-41674-112

NOV 30 1943
N. Y. C.
ROUTED TO

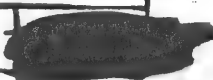
FBI
b7C

WRIGHT, R. 61

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1 AGJ/C

Richard Wright

Richard Wright

100-41674-12 ✓	
F. B. I.	
MAY 9 1944	
N. Y. C.	
ROUTED TO:	

b7c

WRIGHT, R. 62

192

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**

234 U. S. Court House
Foley Square
New York, 7, New York

100-41674

June 3, 1944

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1A GJC

Dear Sir:

In connection with an investigation being conducted by this Bureau it is requested [REDACTED]

Please refer to our file No. 100-41674,
when forwarding to this office:

Your cooperation in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy
E. E. CONROY
Special Agent in Charge



WRIGHT, R. 63

100-41674-12

93

PITTSBURGH COURIER

AUGUST 5, 1944 EDITION

It took Richard Wright, "Native Son" fame, from 1933 to 1944 to discover that Communists are "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened at new ideas which don't fit into their own." He has also discovered at this late date a "lamentable regression" in the Reds position on the American Negro. The story is told in the August Atlantic Monthly. Their militancy on the Negro has vanished, he charges.

ALL THIS WAS obvious to honest, alert minds from the beginning. As agents of a foreign government, secretly committed to the overthrow of American institutions, the Reds are only loyal to Stalin and his Asiatic Tammany. They dumped the Scottsboro racket when it was no longer profitable, abandoned the "Black and White" film to speed U. S. recognition and have now soft-pedaled agitation for equal rights because it might interfere with the war effort. They have double-crossed everybody.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1 AGSC

AUG 8-1944

b7c

100-20676-21

WRIGHT, R. 66

1. a

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO: SAC, NEW YORK
FROM: SAC, WASHINGTON
SUBJECT: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

It has come to the attention of this office that an article written by the above-named subject appears in the August issue of the Atlantic Monthly magazine. It is said that this article relates WRIGHT's joining the Communist Party and his subsequent resignation from it. In this connection, it has also been noted that in the column "The World Today," by GEORGE S. SCHUYLER, appearing in the August 5, 1944, edition of the Pittsburgh Courier, there are two paragraphs with regard to WRIGHT's article in the Atlantic Monthly.

This information is being furnished to you for whatever value it may have and a clipping from the Pittsburgh Courier, as mentioned above, is being enclosed for your further information.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/27/88 BY SP1AGSC

100-15433
Encl.

100-41679-22
1
AUG 8-1944

b7c
Searched
Serialized
Indexed
Filed

WRIGHT, R. 67

Negro Author Criticizes Reds As Intolerant

Wright, Discussing His Own
Break With Communists,
Says Party Fears New Ideas

The Communist position on the American Negro has undergone a "distinct and lamentable regression" in recent years, Richard Wright, Negro author and former party member, said here yesterday in describing Communists as "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own."

Mr. Wright's remarks were prompted by questions growing out of an article which he has written for "The Atlantic Monthly" for August under the title of "Tried to Be a Communist."

In this article, the author of "Native Son" and other books discusses his earliest experiences as a Communist party member in Chicago, touching on the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the party.

The August "Atlantic Monthly" describes the article as the first of two installments and Mr. Wright said yesterday that he would not discuss the specific details of his Chicago break with the Communists because these will be covered in the second magazine article.

Mr. Wright said that his Communist party membership covered the period, roughly, from the latter part of 1932 or early 1933 to 1940. His early association with the Communists in Chicago, he said, was broken in 1937, when he was "ejected" from the party.

On the outs with the party from about May until August, 1937, Mr. Wright said that he was re-initiated in New York in 1937 and "maintained a relationship" with the party until 1940 when, he said, he left the party.

Discussing what he described as the "lamentable regression" in the Communist party position on the American Negro, Mr. Wright said that he does not know the reason for this.

"Publicly," he said, "Communists will deny that there is any substantial change in their militancy but privately they offer any handy excuse. The militancy on the Negro question has passed into the hands of right-wing Negroes. That was not true eight years ago. Most of the battles then were led by Communists."

In answer to the question as to what caused the Chicago split between him and the Communists, Mr. Wright said:

"It was an accumulation of many things—not so much a leaving as an ejection over a difference of opinion. I had my way of expressing my conception of Negro experience in my writing. I thought it would be of value to them. They had their ideas of how I should react as a Communist. There was an irreconcilable gap between our attitudes."

Mr. Wright said that "I do not regard the Communists today as effective instruments for social change" and observed that "the Communists have a terrible lot to learn about people."

"Communists," he added, "peculiarly are too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change. This too often finds expression in intolerance and narrowness. I mean, general intolerance, in an imperious way of working."

"What it amounts to is that they are narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own, whether these ideas are right or wrong."

b2, b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY OPI/AG/SC

CLIPPING FROM THE
N. Y. HERALD TRIBUNE
JUL 28 1944

DATED
FORWARDED BY N. Y. DIVISION

100-41674-26

b7c

WRIGHT, R. 67

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7C with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information:

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-32 pg 2

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WEIGER, R. 72

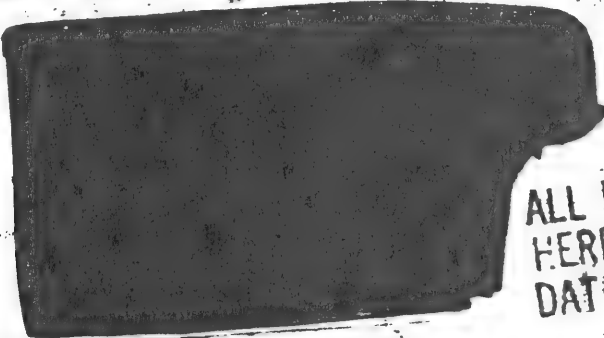
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

b7c

MEMORANDUM

Re: VITO MARANTONIO
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)

In a tribute to ANNA HANKE, former secretary of the International Labor Defense, appearing in the form of a pamphlet entitled "Equal Justice and Democracy in the Service of Victory" published in September 1944 by the I. L. D., the following individuals were listed as officers and members of the national committee of the I. L. D. These individuals listed below are all located in New York City.



b2, b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1 AGJC

National committee members



b2, b7c

F. B. I.
NOV 25 1944
N. Y. C.
ROUTED TO

b7c

WRIGHT, R 73

100-41674-32

206

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 - Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1, b7C, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-34

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 74

 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

b2
b7c

b7c

100-41674 ✓

Special Agent

WRIGHT, R. 75

- 3 -

206

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC, New York

FROM : John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

DATE: May 7, 1945

100-41674
FBI
MAY 8 - 1945
N.Y.C.

Reference is made to your letter of April 17, 1945, in the above captioned matter.

In view of the militant attitude of the subject toward the Negro problem, as set forth in your letter of February 26, 1945, it is believed that you should submit a recommendation for the preparation of a Security Index Card in this case.

You may consider this letter as the Bureau's approval of such a recommendation and you should place a Security Index Card in your files at this time.

5-18-45
Card made + placed in Security Index.
Richard Nathaniel Wright - Native Born - Communist
Int. C-23, 89 Jefferts Place, Brooklyn, NY (Res.)
Free lance writer at residence
100-41674-36Searched
Serialized
Indexed
FiledALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/82 BY 289882

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
New York 7, New York**

June 18, 1946

MEMO

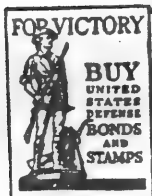
RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
SECURITY MATTER - C

The records of Selective Service Board #178, 44 Court Street, Brooklyn, reflected that as of March 21, 1946, the subject's address was apartment 3F, 82 Washington Place, New York City.

In view of this fact it is suggested that a Security Index Card be appropriately changed and the Bureau advised.

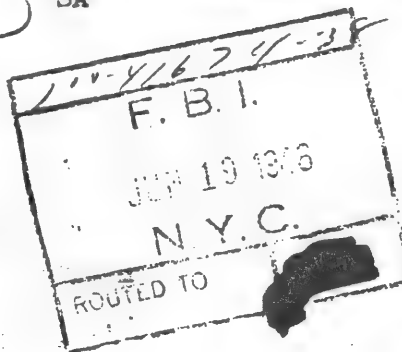
ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1A/BSC

SA



100-41674

b7c



b7c

WRIGHT, R. 77

209

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

2 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7C, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-42

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 78

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : SAC, New York

FROM : Director, FBI

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
SECURITY MATTER - C
Your File 100-41674

DATE: February 3, 1948

MR. SCHEIDT
MR. BELMONT
MR. WYATT
MR. RUSSELL
MR. LADD
MR. CLEGG
MR. GLAVIN
MR. HARBO
MR. MOHR
MR. NICHOLS
MR. ROSEN
MR. TRACY
MR. Egan
MR. Gurnea
MR. Hendon
MR. Pennington
MR. Quinn
MR. Nease
Miss Gandy

*Send file
#7*

In accordance with your recommendation, the Security Index Card relative to the captioned individual has been cancelled and you are authorized to place your copy thereof in the investigative case file.

100-157464

*Lu 1a7
m. 8.*

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP14C/SC

FEB 4 1948
N. Y. C.
ROUTED TO
FILE

676

100-41674-77

Director, FBI

February 11, 1960

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b7C
per
Arm

Subject WRIGHT, according to this report, resides at 14 rue Monsieur le Prince, Paris 6.

The following information was set forth in the above-referenced U. S. Army report:

"In December 1951, [REDACTED] stated that Richard WRIGHT is active in the French Communist Party and has been engaged in spreading communist doctrine through the [REDACTED]

b7C
per
Arm

Director, FBI

February 11, 1960

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FAFG. Mrs. Richard WRIGHT is the active communist member of the family and has made a point of 'insulting Negro personnel who hold views other than communist.' Two acquaintances of Source who had attended some meetings stated that as far as they had been able to discover, the FAFG was devoting all of its time to very uncontrolled discussion of the things that were 'wrong with the US.' Source stated that WRIGHT had boasted that he had 'the State Department in my pocket--they call me in for conferences, the fools.' (u)

"In January 1952, an American Negro male student then attending the University of Paris stated that in about June or July 1950, Richard WRIGHT asked Source to join a 'protest' group aimed at 'forcing the employment of more of the Americans of African ancestry' in US government jobs in Paris. Source told WRIGHT that it would be better to be certain of facts before 'going off half-cocked.' WRIGHT then accused Source of having an 'Uncle Tom attitude.' Later the organization tried to interfere with the French policy of employment and held protest meetings at which the members discussed the fact that Algerians, Africans, and French colonials were not employed in other than menial capacities in Paris." (u)

The above data is being furnished to the Bureau and the New York Office for purposes of information and possible interest.

No further action is being taken in this matter but in the event pertinent information is received in the future on captioned subject, it will be furnished to the Bureau and NYO.

RUC.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Central Research Section

Tolson _____
 Mohr _____
 Parsons _____
 Belmont _____
 Callahan _____
 DeLoach _____
 Malone _____
 McGuire _____
 Rosen _____
 Tamm _____
 Trotter _____
 W.C. Sullivan _____
 Tele. Room _____
 Ingram _____
 Gandy _____

Richard Wright, Novelist, Author of 'Native Son'

PARIS, Nov. 30 (AP). — Richard Wright, the Negro author, died of a heart attack Monday night.

The Mississippi-born writer, a longtime Paris resident, is best known for his novels such as "Black Boy" and "The Outsider" dealing with the problems of the Negro in American society.

Mr. Wright, 52, who had suffered recently from intestinal trouble, was hospitalized Saturday for treatment.

Mr. Wright's latest work dealt with a theme he spent a lifetime exploring. Titled "Fishbelly," the book traces the impact of American racial attitudes upon the Negro.

Mr. Wright was born near Natchez, Miss., on September 4, 1908. He attended a Seventh Day Adventist school near his home but quit and went to

work in Memphis, Tenn., at the age of 15.

He did his first writing during the depression under the auspices of the Federal Writers Project, first in Chicago in 1935 and then in New York in 1937.

Mr. Wright began contributing articles and stories to small literary magazines and to the Daily Worker and New Masses, both Communist publications. He first attracted national attention with "Uncle Tom's Children" in 1939.

"Native Son," published in 1940, established him as one of the foremost American contemporary authors.

Mr. Wright was identified by a Government investigation witness in 1952 as a former Communist who broke with the party.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
 HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
 DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bue

file
 5/98

50 DEC 5 1960

100-157464-A
 NOT RECORDED
 149 DEC 2 1960

The Washington Post and Times Herald _____
 The Washington Daily News _____
 The Evening Star BS _____
 New York Herald Tribune _____
 New York Journal-American _____
 New York Mirror _____
 New York Daily News _____
 New York Post _____
 The New York Times _____
 The Worker _____
 The New Leader _____
 The Wall Street Journal _____
 Date 11/30/60

WRIGHT, R. 45

172



EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
Paris 8, France

dup
Date: December 7, 1960
To: Director, FBI (100-157464)
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SM - C

Re Paris letter 2/11/60.

Enclosed is a clipping from the 11/30/60 issue of the "New York Herald Tribune", European Edition, Paris, reflecting the death of the subject at Paris on 11/28/60. (X)

RUC
2 - Bureau (Enc. - 1)
1 - Paris
[redacted]:CM
(3)

b7c

1-9-67
3 x not made sent to
Legat, Paris with Paris
let 12/19/66. no [redacted] 001 X3
[redacted] REC-30
[redacted] /pc note
attached it. [redacted] gdw

b7c

100-157464-51

17 DEC 13 1960

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

WRIGHT, R. 46

172

From 'The God That Failed'

WHY I QUIT COMMUNISM

By Richard Wright

The Communist Party fraction in the John Reed Club in Chicago instructed me to ask my party cell—"unit," as it was called—to assign me to full duty in the work of the club. I was instructed to give my unit a report of my activities, writing, organizing, speaking. I agreed and wrote the report.

I went to my first unit meeting—which was held in the Black Belt of the South Side—and introduced myself to the Negro organizer.

"Welcome, comrade," he said, grinning. "We're glad to have a writer with us."

The time came for me to make my report, and I took out my notes and told them how I had come to join the Party, what few stray items I had published, what my duties were in the John Reed Club.

I finished, and waited for comment. There was silence. I looked about. Most of the comrades sat with bowed heads. Then I was surprised to catch a twitching smile on the lips of a Negro woman. Minutes passed. The Negro woman lifted her head and looked at the organizer. The organizer smothered a smile. Then the woman broke into unrestrained laughter, bending forward and burying her face in her hands. I stared. Had I said something funny?

During the following days, I learned through discreet questioning that I seemed a fantastic element to the black Communists. I was shocked to hear that I, who had been only to grammar school, had been classified as an INTELLECTUAL.

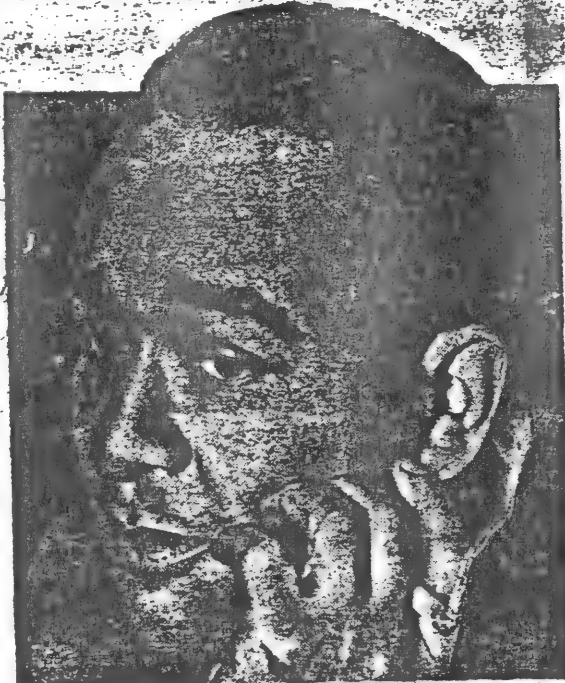
I learned, to my dismay, that the black Communists in my unit had commented upon my shined shoes, my clean skirt, and the tie that I had worn. Above all, my manner of speech had seemed an alien thing to them.

"He talks like a book," one of the Negro comrades had said. And that was enough to condemn me forever as bourgeois.

PARTY DUTIES BROKE into my efforts at expression. The club decided upon a conference of all the Left-Wing writers of the Middle West. I supported the idea and argued that the conference should deal with craft problems. My arguments were rejected. The conference, the club decided, was a political definition of the Negro.

For a few hours a day and march on the picket line the other

The conference convened with a leading Communist attending as adviser. The question debated was: What does the Communist Party expect from the club? The answer of the Communist leader



RICHARD WRIGHT
The Names They Called Him!

ran from organizing to writing novels. I argued that either a man organized or he wrote novels. The Party leader said that both must be done. The attitude of the Party leader prevailed and Left Front, for which I had worked so long, was voted out of existence.

The ideas I had expounded at the conference were linked with the suspicions I had roused among the Negro Communists on the South Side, and the Communist Party was now certain that it had a dangerous enemy in its midst. It was whispered that I was trying to lead a secret group in opposition to the Party. I had learned that denial of accusations was useless. It was now painful to meet a Communist, for I did not know what his attitude would be.

I AVOIDED UNIT MEETINGS for fear of being subjected to discipline. Occasionally, a Negro Communist—defying the code that enjoined him to shun suspects—came to my home

and informed me of the current charges that Communists were bringing against one another. To my astonishment I heard that Buddy Neelson had branded me a "smuggler of reaction."

Buddy Neelson was the Negro who had formulated the Americanist position for the American Negro; he had made speeches in the Kremlin; he had spoken for Stalin himself.

"Why does Neelson call me that?" I asked.

"He says that you are a bourgeois degenerate. I was told that you were a traitor."

"What does that mean?"

"He says that you are organizing the Party with your ideas."

I sought an appointment with Buddy Neelson. He was a short, black man with an ever ready smile, thick lips, a furtive glint in his eyes, and a greasy, sweaty face. He suffered from asthma and would snort at unexpected intervals.

"They tell me you write."

"I try to," I said.

"You can write," he snorted.

read that article you wrote for the New Masses about Joe Louis. Good stuff. First political treatment of sports we've yet had. Ha-ha."

I waited. "Dick," he began, "we're short of forces. We're facing a grave crisis."

"The Party's always facing a crisis," I said.

His smile left and he stared at me.

"You're not cynical, are you, Dick?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But it's the truth! Each week, each month, there's a crisis."

"You're a funny guy," he said, laughing snorting again. "But we've a job to do. We're alerting our work. Fascism's the danger, the danger to all people."

"I understand," I said.

"We've got to defeat the Fascists," he said, snorting from asthma. "We've discussed you and know your abilities. We want you to work with us. We've got to crash out of our narrow way of working and get our message to the church people, students, club people, professionals, middle class."

"I don't know if I fit into things," I said openly.

"We want to trust you with an important assignment," he said.

"What do you want me to do?"

"We want you to organize a committee against the high cost of living."

I was in the midst of writing a novel and he was calling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries.

"Comrade Neelson," I said, "a writer who hasn't written anything worth while is a most doubtful person. Now, I'm in that category. Yet I think I can write. I don't want to ask for special favors, but I'm in the midst of a book which I hope to complete in six months or so. Let me convince myself that I'm wrong about my hankering to write and then I'll be with you all the way."

"Dick," he said, turning in his chair and waving his hand as though to brush away an insect that was annoying him, "you've got to get to the masses of people."

"Dick," he spoke seriously now, "the Party has decided that you are to accept this task."

I went out, angry with myself, angry with him, angry with the Party. Well, I had not broken the decision, but neither had I accepted it wholly.

I ATTENDED THE NEXT unit meeting and asked for a place on the agenda, which

The Author

Richard Wright was born in 1908 on a plantation 25 miles from Natchez, Miss.; of poor Negro parents. Deserted by his father, his mother, a washer woman brought him up. At 11 he left home and worked for two years in Memphis, where he read H. L. Menckens' "Book of Prefaces" and decided to become a writer. With \$15 in his pocket, he went to Chicago and earned his living by odd jobs until the depression put him out of work. His books are: "Uncle Tom's Children" (short stories), "Native Son" and "Black Boy."

was readily granted. When it time came to speak, I said:

"Comrades, for the past ten years I've worked daily with me of you. Despite this, I have in some time found myself in a difficult position in the Party. What caused this difficulty is a long story which I do not care to cite now; it would serve no purpose. But I tell you honestly that I think I've found a solution to my difficulty. I am proposing here tonight that my membership be dropped from the Party rolls."

No ideological differences helped me to say this. I simply not wish to be bound any longer by the Party's decisions. I should like to retain my membership in those organizations in which I have influence, and I shall comply with the Party's program in those organizations. I hope that my words will be accepted in the spirit in which they are said. Perhaps sometime in the future I can meet and talk with the leaders of the Party as to what tasks I can best perform.

I sat down amid a profound silence.

"Is there any discussion?" Comrade Wright's statement the secretary asked finally.

"I move that discussion Wright's statement be deferred," Neelson said.

The next night two Negro Communists called at my home. They pretended to be ignorant of what had happened at the unit meeting. Patiently, I explained what had occurred.

"Your story does not agree with what Neelson says," I said.

"And what does Neelson say?" I asked.

"He says that you are in league with a Trotskyite group, and you made an appeal for Party members to follow you leaving the Party."

Perhaps, since I was leaving the Party, I thought, out of my feelings I could slip

spark into this darkness. I try, not because I wanted to, because I felt that I had to were to live at all.

I would hurl words into darkness and wait for an echo, if an echo sounded, no matter how faintly, I would utter other words to tell, to march, fight, to create a sense of hunger for life that gnaws at all, to keep alive in our best sense of the inexpressible.

From the book **THE GOD THAT FAILED**. Copyright 1940 by Richard Wright. Published by Harper & Bros.

Why Stop? Why Stop?

Internal Security - Subversive

SEP 25 1950

TITLE

CLASS

FROM

DATE

FORWARDED BY

Ref & Home News

JUL 13 1950

FORWARDED BY

DIVISION

INDEXED - 127

NOT RECORDED

85 SEP 1950

11-14

FIVE

WRIGHT, R 51

174

SAC, NEW YORK

August 5, 1944

SAC, WASHINGTON

RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

It has come to the attention of this office that an article written by the above-named subject appears in the August issue of the Atlantic Monthly magazine. It is said that this article relates WRIGHT's joining the Communist Party and his subsequent resignation from it. In this connection, it has also been noted that in the column "The World Today," by GEORGE S. SCHUYLER, appearing in the August 5, 1944, edition of the Pittsburgh Courier, there are two paragraphs with regard to WRIGHT's article in the Atlantic Monthly.

This information is being furnished to you for whatever value it may have and a clipping from the Pittsburgh Courier, as mentioned above, is being enclosed for your further information.

100-15433

Encl. Sent

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/jac

100-15433-3

WRIGHT, R. 57

محررین و قلم کاران

☐ Exact Spelling	☐ Main Criminal Case Files Only	☐ Restrict to Locality of _____
☐ All References	☐ Criminal References Only	
☐ Main Subversive Case Files Only	☒ Main Subversive (If no Main, list all Subversive References)	
☐ Subversive References Only	☐ Main Criminal (If no Main, list all Criminal References)	

File & Serial Number	Remarks	File & Serial Number	Remarks
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]		
100-15433A			
[REDACTED]			b2
[REDACTED]			b7c
[REDACTED]			ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 2/14/89 BY SP1AG/jac

b2
b7c

Requested by	Squad	Extension	File No.
	6		

Searched by _____ (date) _____ 100-15433-4

Consolidated by _____
(date) _____

67c

INDEXED
SERIALIZED *am* FILED *11*
JUN 27 1958

Reviewed by _____ (date) _____

File Review Symbols

I - Identical
NI - Not identical

? - Not identifiable
U - Unavailable reference

SERIALIZED 7 INDEXED 1
 FILED 1
 JUL 27 1958
 FBI - WASHINGTON

AB1 - WASHINGTON

Negro Author Criticizes Reds As Intolerant

Wright, Discussing His Own
Break With Communists,
Says Party Fears New Ideas

The Communist position on the American Negro has undergone a "distinct and lamentable regression" in recent years, Richard Wright, Negro author and former party member, said here yesterday in describing Communists as "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own."

Mr. Wright's remarks were prompted by questions growing out of an article which he has written for "The Atlantic Monthly" for August under the title of "I Tried to Be a Communist."

In this article, the author of "Native Son" and other books discusses his earliest experiences as a Communist party member in Chicago, touching on the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the party.

The August "Atlantic Monthly" describes the article as the first of two installments and Mr. Wright said yesterday that he would not discuss the specific details of his Chicago break with the Communists because these will be covered in the second magazine article.

Mr. Wright said that his Communist party membership covered the period, roughly, from the latter part of 1932 or early 1933 to 1940. His early association with the Communists in Chicago, he said, was broken in 1937, when he was "ejected" from the party.

He remained with the party about 1937 until August, 1940, Mr. Wright said. He was re-instated in New York in 1937 and "maintained a relationship" with the party until 1940 when, he said, he left the party.

Discussing what he described as the "lamentable regression" in the Communist party position on the American Negro, Mr. Wright said that he does not know the reason for this.

"Publicly," he said, "Communists will deny that there is any substantial change in their militancy but privately they offer any handy excuse. The militancy on the Negro question has passed into the hands of right-wing Negroes. That was not true eight years ago. Most of the battles then were led by Communists."

In answer to the question as to what caused the Chicago rift between him and the Communists, Mr. Wright said:

"It was an accumulation of many things—not so much a leaving as an ejection over a difference of opinion. I had my way of expressing my conception of Negro experience in my writing. I thought it would be of value to them. They had their ideas of how I should react as a Communist. There was an irreconcilable gap between our attitudes."

Mr. Wright said that "I do not regard the Communists today as effective instruments for social change" and observed that "the Communists have a terrible lot to learn about people."

"Communists," he added, "peculiarly are too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change. This too often finds expression in intolerance and narrowness. I mean, general intolerance, in an imperious way of working."

"What it amounts to is that they are narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own. Whether these ideas are right or wrong."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 5/22/88 BY QP/ABSC

100-41674-17
FBI
JULY 27 1944
N.Y.C.

CLIPPING FROM

NEW YORK HERALD
DATED 7-28-44
FORWARDED BY N.Y.C.

WRIGHT, R 64

Richard Nathaniel Wright

NEW YORK

Negro Author Criticizes Reds As Intolerant

Wright, Discussing His Own
Break With Communists,
Says Party Fears New Ideas

The Communist position on the American Negro has undergone a "distinct and lamentable regression" in recent years, Richard Wright, Negro author and former party member, said here yesterday in describing Communists as "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own."

Mr. Wright's remarks were prompted by questions growing out of an article which he has written for "The Atlantic Monthly" for August under the title of "I Tried to Be a Communist."

In this article, the author of "Native Son" and other books discusses his earliest experiences as a Communist party member in Chicago, touching on the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the party.

The August "Atlantic Monthly" describes the article as the first of two installments and Mr. Wright said yesterday that he would not discuss the specific details of his Chicago break with the Communists because these will be covered in the second magazine article.

Mr. Wright said that his Communist party membership covered the period, roughly, from the latter part of 1932 or early 1933 to 1940. His early association with the Communists in Chicago, he said, was broken in 1937, when he was "ejected" from the party.

On the only with the party from about May until August, 1937, Mr. Wright said that he was "ejected" from the party in 1937 and "maintained a relationship" with the party until 1940 when, he said, he left the party.

Discussing what he described as the "lamentable regression" in the Communist party position on the American Negro, Mr. Wright said that he does not know the reason for this.

"Publicly," he said, "Communists will deny that there is any substantial change in their militancy but privately they offer any handy excuse. The militancy on the Negro question has passed into the hands of right-wing Negroes. That was not true eight years ago. Most of the battles then were led by Communists."

In answer to the question as to what caused the Chicago rift between him and the Communists, Mr. Wright said:

"It was an accumulation of many things—not so much a leaving as an ejection over a difference of opinion. I had my way of expressing my conception of Negro experience in my writing. I thought it would be of value to them. They had their ideas of how I should react as a Communist. There was an irreconcilable gap between our attitudes."

Mr. Wright said that "I do not regard the Communists today as effective instruments for social change" and observed that "the Communists have a terrible lot to learn about people."

"Communists," he added, "peculiarly are too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change. This too often finds expression in intolerance and narrowness. I mean, general intolerance, in an imperious way of working."

"What it amounts to is that they are narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own, whether these ideas are right or wrong."

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1 AJS/C

100-41674-18
F. B. I.
JUL 28 1944
N. Y. C.

New York Herald Tribune
July 28, 1944

WRIGHT, R 65

195

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED 289882
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1AC/SC

Reds All Wrong, Wright Quits 'Em

inter-
tech?
that
were
cried
a in

It took a long time for Richard Wright, the Negro writer, to learn his lesson.

Wyo.
lonal
told
the
trick
on

Where, until recently, he was one of the high priests of the Communist Party staunchly defending Red ideology as the only possible political philosophy for his race, today he was hurling epithets at his former Communist comrades.

"Bigoted! Intolerant! Narrow-minded!" were a few of the choicest labels applied to all Communists by the author of "Native Son" and other books.

REDS LIVE A LIE.

Wright's abrupt about-face from the left to the right was revealed in an article written for the August "Atlantic Monthly" under the title of "I Tried to Be a Communist."

Elaborating on the article Wright discussed why he "took a walk" on the Communist Party back in 1940 after discovering that the Reds live a lie to their ideals.

At the same time Wright advised all members of his race to take a walk with him.

"HAVE LOT TO LEARN."

"I do not regard the Communists today as effective instruments for social change," Wright said. "The Communists have a terrible lot to learn about people."

"Communists peculiarly are too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change. This too often finds expression in intolerance and narrowness. And I mean general intolerance in an imperious way of working."

"What it amounts to is that they are narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own, whether these ideas are right or wrong."

Wright got an idea of what Communists think of "racial equality" in 1935 when he attended a Communist party writers' congress in Carnegie Hall. Wright had come on from Chicago by hitchhiking with several members of his race.

"I asked about housing accommodations and all white members of the Communist Party looked embarrassed," he said.

One of the white Communists went out and returned "frantic-eyed and sweating" to announce he had had no luck.

VI.
H. S.
meal
shav
ousl
gan
June

Rev.
CH.
hop C
ton, I
dent c
the M
The
electer
of Nev

W
HE
E
F
S

Gro
Kida.
Taze
and
bec

*N.Y. Journal American
7/28/44*

100-41674-29
FBI
AUG 30 1944
N. Y. C.

b7c

WRIGHT, R. 68

207

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP1/KSC

Broadway

AUGUST 28, 1944

By DANTON WALKER

The Home Front

General Douglas MacArthur is in line for a Cabinet post (probably Secretary of War) if F. D. R. gets his Fourth Term. . . . Vice President Wallace, due to start actively campaigning for Roosevelt next month, will be rewarded with the No. 1 food job of the world, as head of a commission to create a permanent United Nations relief setup. . . . Anna Roosevelt Boettiger may become



Jon Hall

official secretary for her father; even now, those who formerly approached Harry Hopkins for Presidential favors must now see Mrs. Boettiger. . . . James Byrnes, the "Assistant President," will quit his war mobilization post after the election and accept a \$100,000 job with Ben Co-



Anna Boettiger

hen's law firm. . . . France will get an Ambassador from the U. S. some time next month, and Norman Armour is highest on the list of candidates at present. . . . Diplomatic Rumor of the Week is that Hitler has been out of Germany since Aug. 1, and a double will soon oblige by being assassinated. . . . Lloyd's of London now offers 6 to 5 that Germany surrenders unconditionally before Oct. 31.

Donald Nelson's mission to China is to iron out differences between Allied chieftains in that sector. Upon his return he will be groomed to replace a prominent New Dealer, now out of favor. . . . Mme. Kung, wife of the Minister of Finance, is now the most influential lady in China. . . . Col. Carlos P. Romulo, Pulitzer Prize winner, is due to succeed Joaquin Miguel Elizalde as Resident Commissioner of the Philippines. . . . Judge Juvenal Marchisio, who has been loaned by the local Domestic Relations Court to American Relief for Italy, departs for Rome shortly. . . . The present United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration is on the verge of liquidation. . . . On the heels of the liberation of France, a new French Purchasing Commission will buy \$200,000,000 worth of supplies in this country. . . . Another by-product of France's release will be an outbreak of Broadway musical comedies with a Paris background. . . . Washington has proof of secret Nazi war prisoner camps where thousands are held, without possibility of outside relief.

Sidney Hillman is due to be given the air by F. D. R. "right after the election," according to a prominent Chicago Democrat whose entire political future depends on a Fourth Term. . . . Richard Wright, author of "Native Son," has started an uproar with his two-part serial in the Atlantic Monthly called "I Tried to Be a Communist." . . . Plan for a Federation of Catholic States of Europe, with the okay of Stalin and Churchill, has been submitted to the Pope. . . . William Bullitt is said to be the unofficial liaison officer for communications between Vatican City and Moscow. . . . Dr. Floyd Black, president of the American College of Istanbul, played an important role in negotiations for Bulgaria's withdrawal from the war. . . . Brig. Gen. William O'Dwyer, now in Italy, notifies New York friends that he'll retire from politics when his terms as Brooklyn District Attorney is over. . . . Lieut. Dave Hopkins, son of Harry, is back here for a new assignment.

N.Y. Daily News.
8/28/44

100-41674-28
F. B. I.
AUG 30 1944
N. Y. C.
ROUTED TO

b7c

201

WRIGHT, R. 69

Richard Wright, author of the popular novel, Native Son, has written the articles for the Atlantic Monthly entitled, "I Trust to Be a Communist." I have just finished reading these articles. They are a conglomeration of anti-Communism and anti-Semitism, hidden behind the cry that the Communists stood in the way of his creative writing. They are also against the interest of the Negro people and they reveal a lack of understanding of social problems. Referring to a time when he was called upon to accept an assignment to head a committee against the high cost of living, Wright says:

"I was in the midst of writing a novel and he (the Communist) was calling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries. . . . I gritted my teeth as the daily value of pork chops was tabulated, longing to be at home with my writing."

This clearly reveals Wright's whole outlook and attitude.

Wright's shameful manner of writing about Negroes is disgusting and damaging to their dignity. He refers to his failure to organize a theatre among Negro actors in Chicago. These actors, sensing how the dignity of Negroes should be upheld, protested against one play Wright submitted. Referring to this incident, Wright says, " . . . a delegation of Negro men came to my office and took out their pocketknives and flashed them in my face." Wright, expressing contempt for these Negro actors, hides behind what he terms Communist inspired actions against him.

CARICATURE

Wright caricatures Negroes, whether in the Communist movement or outside, as if they were children.

But what Wright has done is a bad turn to the Negro people. Objectively it is an act to isolate and divert them from their best allies in the labor and progressive movement. If it had not been for the Communist Party and the progressive labor movement and the militancy and the fortitude of the Negro people, where would they be today?

I recall a similar circumstance

with Wright, like the one he complains about in Chicago. It was in Harlem in the days of the unemployed struggle. I was secretary of the Harlem Division of the Communist Party. Wright was a reporter for the Daily Worker assigned to Harlem to write about the problems of the people. We were in the midst of serious struggles of the unemployed.

CENTRE OF STRUGGLE

The Communists of Harlem were in the center of these struggles trying to organize them. We wanted Wright to aid these struggles with his writings. We sought to put him to writing about pork chops, high rents, crowded houses, child welfare and relief. Wright was dissatisfied with this assignment. He hid it, however. But he complained to a number of people, never to our committee directly, that he did not want to write for the Daily Worker.

This revealed again a fundamental weakness in Wright. Not having previously had direct contact with mass struggles, this work could have equipped him still more for creative writing, which the Communists did not want to stifle but to aid!

He did not understand that writing for the Daily Worker would have afforded him a broad platform to reach masses of people. It showed failure on his part to grasp the role of an artist to serve effectively the interests of the people by writing about their problems, inspiring them and helping them to better prepare and organize their struggles.

N. Y. EXPERIENCE

The explanation of this weakness is that Wright never identified himself with his people. He preferred to be aloof from them, isolated from them and left alone "at home with his writing."

It seems strange that Wright in his Atlantic Monthly articles did not mention his experience in New York when he was known and respected by the Communist Party and he himself seemed proud of the Communist Party's appreciation of him.

I understand the two articles which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly were taken from a fiction writing autobiography. I have not read this book and do not know whether or not he does more than these experiences there. There were certainly a number of significant incidents here that could throw more light on Wright's charges. That is why the absence of them in these two articles seems so strange to me.

From my knowledge I know that the cry that the Communists tried to hold him down is not what prompted Wright to do what he did.

Reading Wright's articles in the Atlantic Monthly, no fair-minded person could lay them aside feeling that Wright has made a case of himself, unless it is a rationalization of his own weaknesses. A few things are clear. What Wright did is like making a bargain to get into the good graces of those who have an anti-Communist axe to grind.

Does Wright think that the highest achievements of the artist is the Westbrook Pegler type of red-baiting, labor-baiting, Negro-baiting an anti-Semitic slanders?

Now we are faced with a crucial election when the Negro people are trying to choose between progress and reaction. There are people who are trying to confuse and divide the people. Wright's act fits right into this pattern. But the Negro people are discerning and they will repudiate these methods as they have done in the past.

CLIPPING FROM THE DAILY WORKER

DATED SEP 5 1944
FORWARDED BY N. Y. DIVISION

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/88 BY SP4HSC

289882

100-41674-30
F. B. I.
SEP 26 1944
N. Y. C.
ROUTED TO FILE

b7c

REQUEST INFORMATION FROM THE F.B.I., N.Y., ON THE FOLLOWING:

FILE NO: 296513

SECTION: MISAFFECTION

DATE: 9 Oct 1944

NAME AND ALIASES: WRIGHT, RICHARD H.

HOME ADDRESSES (for the past three yrs.): (?) Lefferts Place Bklyn NY;

BUSINESS ADDRESS (for the past three yrs.): Author of "Native Son"

Contributor "New Masses"; Daily Worker; Spencer Writers School 362 4th Ave NYC

EMPLOYED BY:

AGE: _____ BORN: _____ PLACE: _____

DESCRIPTION: COLOR: C HEIGHT: _____ WEIGHT: _____ EYES: _____ HAIR: _____

REMARKS: (Include any other data that will assist in identifying person.)

HEADQUARTERS SECOND SERVICE COMMAND
OFFICE OF DIRECTOR, SEC. & INTEL. DIV.
GOVERNORS ISLAND, N.Y.

FOR USE OF F.B.I.

REFERENCE:

100-41674

* 100-41674

Information reflected in
files furnished to:

A. E. Allen

DATE: 5 Oct 44

BY: [redacted] b7c

FORM #13

IMMEDIATE ACTION

OCT 5 1944
N.Y.C.

WRIGHT, R. 71

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET6

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7C, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-55 and 56

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 80

New York, New York
November 3, 1950

MEMO:

RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SM - C

b7c
b7D

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SA

b7c

SI Card previously cancelled. (ser. 46)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 12/22/88 BY CP1AGJO
289882

[REDACTED]
100-41674

b7c

FBI - NEW YORK
NOV 6 1950
[REDACTED]

b7c

WRIGHT, R. 81

212

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 - Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7c, b7d with no segregable material available for release to you.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.

☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.

☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

NY 100-41674-57

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 82

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7c, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Documents originated with another Government agency(ies). These documents were referred to that agency(ies) for review and direct response to you.

_____ Pages contain information furnished by another Government agency(ies). You will be advised by the FBI as to the releasability of this information following our consultation with the other agency(ies).

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
NY 100-41674-58

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 83

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
American Embassy
Paris 8, France

Date: November 21, 1958
To: Director, FBI
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris letter 10/29/58. ✓

[REDACTED]

RUC.

2 - Bureau
1 - Paris
CM
(3)

Classified by 2640
Exempt from GDS Category 1
Date of Declassification Indefinite

AGENCY CC-Huf
REQ REC'D
DATE FORW 10-8-58
HOW FORW 1-2-59
BY [REDACTED]

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) ON 2640 by [REDACTED]
DATE 4-9-77

RECEIVED
117

DEC 2 1 52 PM '58

CLASS. & EXT. BY 5081 [REDACTED]
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 8-35-91

11 DEC 2 1958

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

NOV 35 1 30 PM '58

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) ON 2640 by [REDACTED]
DATE 10-2-87

SUBV. CONTROL

WRIGHT, R. 84



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
American Embassy
Paris 8, France

Date: October 29, 1958
To: Director, FBI
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris letter 8/21/58. ✓

[REDACTED]

P.

2 - Bureau
1 - Paris
[REDACTED]:CM
(3)

88615/10
8-25-61
8-25-61

Classified by 1040
Exempt from GDS Category 1
Date of Declassification Indefinite
6-9-77

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 6-9-77

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

406 1 1 03 64 28
100-157464-44
REC'D LET

REC-TL

100-157464-44
20 NOV 4 1958

11-10-58
11-10-58
11-10-58
11-10-58

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-21-81

SUBV CONTROL

WRIGHT, R. 85

b7c

164



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
American Embassy
Paris 8, France

gnd

11-1
W

ROL
6-7-58

Date: August 21, 1958
To: Director, FBI
From: Legal Attache, Paris *100-6971*
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Re Paris let 7/7/58.

[REDACTED]

b1
b7c

P

2 - Bureau
1 - Paris
:AM
(3)

2040
Exempt from GDS Category 1
Date of Declassification Indefinite
6-9-77

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) *2041*
DATE *6-9-77*

1cc - NY by 8/5 (0-25)
9-3-58

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP8 BTJ/K*
FBI/DOJ - FOM 11.1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81*

28
5 5 11 PM '58
RECEIVED
REC.D
EX-135

REC-93

100-157464-43

13 AUG 26 1958

52 SEP 4 1958

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) *class*
DATE *10-21-81*

WRIGHT, R. 86

163



~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation

~~SECRET~~

Washington, D. C.
July 7, 1958

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP-8 JH*
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2, 1-2.4.3
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81* RICHARD WRIGHT

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

*b1
b7D*

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] S

[REDACTED] S

[REDACTED] S

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) *2040 JH*
DATE *6-9-77*

2040
Exempt from GDS Category 1
Date of Declassification Indefinite
ARC-6-9-77

*cc - State ltr (0-144)
CIA ltr (0-148)
ACSI ltr (0-144)
NY ltr (0-25)*

AGENCY
REQ. REC'D
DATE FORW. *7-22-58*
HOW FORW. *R/S*
BY *[Signature]*

BT

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
ENCLOSURE

~~SECRET~~

7/8

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) *Class*
DATE *10-21-81 JH*

WRIGHT, R. 87

162



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
American Embassy
Paris 8, France

Date: July 7, 1958
To: Director, FBI
From: Legat, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP-8
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-25-81

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

Re Paris letter 6/26/58.

Any additional information coming to the attention
of this office concerning the subject will be forwarded to
the Bureau.

One extra copy of this letter is provided for trans-
mittal to New York, office of origin.

P.

Enclosures - 5

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF 2040 by jmc
DATE 6-9-77

72040
GDS Category 1
Classification Indefinite
6-9-77

1cc - NY by H/s (1-25)
7-22-58

REC-42

100 157464-42

15 JUL 14 1958

5 ENCLOSURE

REC-42 1-9-67

2 Xerox made sent to
Legat, Paris with Paris lt
1249-66/12

SUBV CONTROL

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF 10-21-81

WRIGHT, R. SP

67 JUL 22 1958

b7c



THE FOREIGN SERVICE
OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

American Embassy
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~

48

Date: June 26, 1958
To: Director, FBI
From: Legal Attache, Paris (100-697)
Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

ROL
5/7/73

f 11-1

Re Washington Field Office let to Bureau 4/4/58.

[REDACTED]

bl
b7c
5

P

b7c

:AM
(5)

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-21-81

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-21-81
EXEMPT
Date of Declassification Indefinite
6-9-77

CLASS. & EXT. BY... SP1 A/B/C
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2...
DATE OF REVIEW... 8-25-81

EX-124

100-157464-1
7-7-58

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

REG-74

100-157464-1

52 JUL 8 1958

WRIGHT, R. 89

~~SECRET~~

f 11-1

160

157464 ✓

May 29, 1958

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: SACS, NEW YORK
CHICAGO

FROM: DIRECTOR, FBI

CLASS. & EXT. BY...
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW...

SP8 BTG/bca
3-25-81
P. 25-81

INTERNAL SECURITY - C
SMITH ACT OF 1940

b2, b7C

Re CG airtel May 24, 1958, requesting that the Bureau authorize NY to contact Richard Wright concerning his possible knowledge of [redacted]

A review of Bufiles reflects that Wright, on February 18, 1958, executed an application for passport at Paris, France, on which he stated that he has resided outside of the U. S. since September, 1949, and that his date of returning to the U. S. is indefinite. On February 28, 1958, the Department of State authorized the issuance of a passport to Wright.

[redacted]

100-157464 (Wright)

CONFIDENTIAL

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

YELLOW
DUPLICATE
MAY 30 1958
MAILED

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-21-81

60 JUN 10 1958

MAIL ROOM ☐

WRIGAT, R. 90

CG [REDACTED] b2, b7c

Chicago. [REDACTED] the person believed to be
WRIGHT was highly regarded by [REDACTED] b7c

Indices of the Chicago Office reflect that
RICHARD WRIGHT, the author of "Native Son" in 1936 and
1937 was using the address of Apartment Number 1, 3743 Indiana
Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

BUREAU b7c

It is requested that the New York Division be
permitted to contact RICHARD WRIGHT concerning his possible
knowledge of [REDACTED]

It is
particularly desired that information be developed of
WRIGHT concerning any statements made by [REDACTED]

THE NEW YORK DIVISION

AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Will on receipt of permission from the Bureau,
interview RICHARD WRIGHT along the lines set out above.

Copy

AIRTEL

b2, b7c

TO : DIRECTOR, FBI [REDACTED]
FROM : SAC, CHICAGO [REDACTED]
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
INTERNAL SECURITY - C;
SMITH ACT OF 1940

DATE: 5-26-58

b7c

ReBulet dated May 2, 1958 entitled "U.S. SMITH ACT MEMBERSHIP RETRIAL)" and New York letter to Bureau May 13, 1958 entitled [REDACTED] IS-C" and my airtel of May 22, 1958.

[REDACTED]

the author of "Native Son". [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT, [REDACTED] could not place WRIGHT in the CP but recalled [REDACTED] had numerous discussions with person believed to be WRIGHT concerning a manuscript of a publication being prepared by WRIGHT. [REDACTED] the individual believed to be RICHARD WRIGHT was employed at the settlement house at 39th and Langley Avenue, Chicago, Illinois and was connected in some way with the Abraham Lincoln School of

- ③ - Bureau (RM)
- 4 - New York (RM)

(2-100- [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT)
5 - Chicago [REDACTED]

b2, b7c

(1-100-New [REDACTED] RICHARD WRIGHT)

[REDACTED] JVK
(12)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 888 BTJ/bce

b7c
WRIGHT, R 92

157

WFO 100-15433

On February 13, 1958, RICHARD WRIGHT appeared before AGNES SCHNEIDER, Consul of the United States of America at Paris, France, being duly sworn, stated he was submitting the following statement as part of his application for a passport which he executed on February 13, 1958. In that statement, subject stated he was not then a member of the Communist Party, but had been a member of the Communist Party from 1932 to 1942, and called attention to the statement he had executed at the American Embassy, Paris, France, on September 16, 1954, for further details in that regard.

The Communist Party has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

On September 16, 1954, RICHARD WRIGHT appeared before AGNES SCHNEIDER, Consul of the United States of America at Paris, France, being duly sworn, furnished a statement consisting of answers to questions annexed to his statement. In that statement, subject identified himself as being the same RICHARD WRIGHT whose experiences in the communist movement were included in the book, "The God That Failed." Subject stated he could not fix the exact time of his joining the Communist Party because he was a functionary in the Communist Party before he actually joined the Communist Party. He explained that the method used by the Communist Party in recruiting is of such a nature that the line or date of determining the exact membership is very difficult. He stated that to the best of his recollection, the date (about 1933) shown in his book, "The God That Failed", is correct. Subject stated that he is the RICHARD WRIGHT who wrote a letter to the League of American Writers expressing his views on the Spanish Civil War, which was published in May, 1938, in the booklet, "Writers Take Sides."

The League of American Writers has been designated by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

Subject stated at the time of writing the above-mentioned letter he was a member of the Communist Party. He stated he is not now a member of the Communist Party of any country of the world.

WFO 100-15433

Subject stated that he disaffiliated with the Communist Party of the United States sometime during the year 1942, and that his disaffiliation came about because of a series of ideological disputes he had with the following Communist officials: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and others. He stated his decision to break with the Communist Party was predicated upon his disagreement with the Communist Party's position upon the Negro question in the United States. He stated that [REDACTED] at that time urged him to become a member-at-large of the Communist Party, but that he refused to heed that suggestion. Subject stated that two years later, in 1944, he publicly indicated his disaffiliation with the Communist Party by means of a press conference held in the office of his agent in New York, PAUL REYNOLDS, and a few months later he wrote two articles in the "Atlantic Monthly" indicating he was no longer affiliated with the Communist Party.

Subject was asked if he was acquainted with [REDACTED] in the Office of War Information. Subject stated that he has a slight acquaintanceship with [REDACTED] and it dates exactly from the period which he did some voluntary work for the Office of War Information in 1942. He stated he met [REDACTED] in the Office of War Information in 1942, and as he recalls was introduced to [REDACTED] and that this introduction took place in the presence of [REDACTED]. Subject stated that [REDACTED] was known to him as a member of the Communist Party, and he described [REDACTED]

In regard to [REDACTED] subject stated he was not known to him as having any affiliation with the Communist Party at that time. Subject stated he was somewhat surprised and taken back when [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] and the manner of his being introduced to him implied that [REDACTED] understood the subject's political position very well. Subject stated that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] one of the leading communists of the United States, approached him shortly after his introduction to [REDACTED] and asked him to make a formal application to work for the Office of War Information. Subject stated he told them that this would be rather difficult since he was a publicly known communist writer and had been Chief of the Harlem Bureau of the "Daily Worker."

The "Daily Worker" was an East Coast communist newspaper which suspended publication on January 13, 1958.

Subject stated that [REDACTED] informed him that the Communist Party knew exactly what it was doing in asking him to make this move, and that he should forthwith get an application blank [REDACTED] would aid him in filling out the application blank. Subject stated he obtained the application blank and [REDACTED] called at his home, which at that time was at 11 Revere Place, Brooklyn, New York, and they jointly filled out this application. Subject stated the application reflected that he was a member of the Communist Party and objected to the linking of communism with fascism, as the application implied, and indicated that subject was a patriotic person wishing to make a contribution to the war effort. Subject stated he took this application before a Notary Public and swore to the truthfulness of its contents, an act which at the time made him, perhaps, the only sworn Communist in the United States. Subject stated he took this application [REDACTED] the Office of War Information and handed it to them. He stated they read it and had a consultation about it in his sight, but out of reach of his hearing. Subject stated that their comment to him was, "You are really intransigent." Subject stated he returned to his house and waited anxiously for some days to hear from his application, and he began to suspect that they never actually turned it in. He stated he does not know what happened to it, for he never had a reply to that application. Subject stated he consulted with [REDACTED] about why he never heard about his application, and [REDACTED] astounded him in his home in Brooklyn by telling him he had no recollection of having helped subject make out such an application. Subject stated that upon reflection, he realized that the Communist Party had undoubtedly decided he was too well known as a communist to be sponsored for work in the Office of War Information, and they had, therefore, chosen someone else less politically prominent to take the job.

WFO 100-15433

he was supposed to have. Subject stated it was at that time he indicated to [REDACTED]

and that he was through. Subject stated that [REDACTED] him to become a member-at-large of the Communist Party, but subject rejected this suggestion [REDACTED] Subject stated he has had no further contact with [REDACTED] since that time, nor has he had any contact with the Communist Party [REDACTED]

He stated he has met [REDACTED] on several occasions since then, and has attempted to extract from him an explanation of what transpired concerning his sworn application, [REDACTED] constantly denied all knowledge of such an incident, which has caused the subject to distrust [REDACTED] profoundly.

On February 13, 1958, at Paris, France, the subject executed an application for passport. In that application, the subject stated he was born September 4, 1908 at Natchez, Mississippi, and maintains his residence at 14 rue Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France. He indicated he has resided outside the United States as follows:

France (May, 1946 to December, 1946)
France (August, 1947 to August, 1949)
Argentina
and France (September, 1949 to date)

Subject stated that he considers Paris, France to be his legal residence and indicated that the date of his return to the United States is indefinite. Subject indicated he was last married at Coytesville, New Jersey on March 12, 1941 to FREDa POPLOWICZ, who was born September 3, 1912 at New York, New York. Subject listed his father as NATHAN WRIGHT, born about 1879 in Mississippi and his mother as ELLA WILSON, born about 1881 in Mississippi. He stated the present whereabouts of his father are unknown, and that his mother presently resides in Chicago, Illinois. He listed as references [REDACTED]

Subject indicated that he desired a passport to permit him to visit France and other countries for the purpose of travel and business.

On February 21, 1958, the Department of State authorized the American Embassy, Paris, to issue a passport to the subject.

WFO 100-15433

The following information concerning the issuance of previous passports to the subject was set forth in his passport file:

On May 1, 1939, Passport Number 614947 was issued to the subject. In his application for that passport, subject stated he desired to travel to Mexico, England, and France for a visit of one year's duration for the purpose of study and writing.

On September 17, 1940, the subject, by letter to the Passport Office, requested the return of Passport Number 614947 which was taken from him by Immigration authorities at the Mexican border on June 15, 1940. Subject stated that on October 15, 1940, he intends to take a trip to the Soviet Union and will depart from San Francisco en route to Vladivostok via Yokahama. He stated he will be making this trip as an invited guest of the League of Russian Writers and the purpose of the trip will be to study the national minority problems existing in the Soviet Union.

On September 27, 1940, the Passport Office, by letter informed the subject that there was no imperative necessity for his journey to the Soviet Union and that the Department of State was unable to validate his passport for the journey.

On May 13, 1941, subject, by letter to the Passport Office, requested renewal of his Passport Number 614947 in order to permit him to travel to the Soviet Union and China. He stated he intended to depart from the United States at San Francisco on July 21, 1941 for travel to Vladivostok via Kobe, Japan. Subject stated the purpose of his trip would be to write news articles for the Associated Negro Press, 3507 South Parkway, Chicago, Illinois.

On June 24, 1941, the Passport Office, by letter to the subject, informed him that the Department of State did not believe that accredited American Journalists should be permitted to proceed to the Soviet Union until the Soviet Union was disposed to be more lenient toward the travel of United States representatives.

WFO 100-15433

On March 9, 1946, subject, by letter to the Passport Office, advised that he intended to travel to France on April 15, 1946. He stated that his wife serves him in the capacity of secretary and research worker, and inasmuch as he is to represent the publication, "Twice a Year", to the French public, writing articles about French literary developments, reestablishing contacts for the distribution of the periodical, and seeking manuscripts for reproduction in America, it was necessary that she accompany him.

On April 29, 1946, Passport Number 64829 was issued to the subject and was validated for travel to France only. On March 16, 1948, subject's passport was renewed for two years. At the time of renewal, the subject stated that he has resided in France since May, 1946, for the purpose of serving as a Correspondent for the Associated Negro Press.

On March 6, 1950, Passport Number 122 was issued to the subject at the American Embassy, Buenos Aires, Argentina. In his application for that passport, the subject stated he desired a passport in order to visit France, Haiti, England, Italy, Switzerland, and Belgium.

On November 26, 1951, the American Embassy, Paris, France, furnished information to the Department of State reflecting that the subject was maintaining residence in Paris, and that the Embassy had received information indicating that the subject was willing to go to any length in order to attract attention to the problem of racial discrimination in general and to its manifestations in the United States in particular. It was further stated that the subject has been using as an instrument for his publicity, a group to which he has given the name of "Franco-American Fellowship."

WIFE, NICHOLE WRIGHT
On February 21, 1952, the subject's Passport Number 122 was renewed for two years at the American Embassy, London, England. At the time of renewal, subject stated he was residing at 28 Glenluc, London, England, and pursuing the occupation of writer.

WIFE, NICHOLE WRIGHT
On February 23, 1954, Passport Number 2536 was issued to the subject at the American Embassy, Paris, France. In his application for that passport, the subject stated he was residing with his wife, FREDA PCPLOWICZ, and two children, JULIA WRIGHT, born April 15, 1942 at Brooklyn, New York, and RACHEL WRIGHT, born January 17, 1949 at Paris, France.

WFO 100-15433

There was no additional pertinent information contained in the subject's passport file.

- RUC -

- 8 -

WRIGHT, R. 99

150

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO :

DIRECTOR, FBI

DATE: 4/4/58

FROM :

SAC, WFO (100-15433)

SUBJECT:

RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Being forwarded herewith to the Bureau are four copies and to New York three copies of the report of SA [redacted] WFO, dated 4/4/58.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Copies of passport application photo of subject and his wife will be forwarded to New York via routing slip.

This case was called to the attention of WFO by ROBERT JOHNSON, Chief, Legal Section, Passport Office, Department of State.

EX-126 ENCLOSURE

- 2-Bureau (Encls. 4)
- 3-New York (Encls. 3) (RM)
- 1-WFO

[redacted]:bsb
(6)

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/lee

REC-1

EX-126

100-157464-40

APR 8 1958

SUB CONTROL

57 APR 21 1958 F139

WRIGHT, R. 100

b7c

11-1

Release on State letter 5/26/58
see 6/14/82

m

151

Assistant Attorney General Warren Glavin III
Criminal Division

December 2, 1953

Director, FBI

CONFIDENTIAL

88343

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF
AMERICAN-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP, INC.
INTERNAL SECURITY - C
INTERNAL SECURITY ACT OF 1950
Your Reference 149-1022
FBI File 100-146984

Richard Wright

Reference is made to your memorandum of
November 20, 1953, bearing the initials NO:RAC and,
in which you requested that certain individuals
be interviewed in detail relative to the
captioned organization.

Pursuant to your request, efforts
are being made to conduct these interviews and
the results will be promptly furnished to you
upon receipt. APPROPRIATE AGENCIES

AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF *class*
DATE *10-21-81* *ons*

2cc - Chicago (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - Los Angeles (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - Mobile (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

2cc - New York (W/Enclosure) (See Note on Page 2.)

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP/ST/1/1/1*
REASON - FCIM 11.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81*

100-157464-
NOT RECORDED
44 DEC 9 1953

cc - Bufile [redacted]
cc - Bufile [redacted]
cc - Bufile 157464 (Wright)
cc - Bufile [redacted]
cc - Bufile [redacted]

YELLOW
DUPLICATE
DEC - 4 1953
MAILED

58 DEC 10 1953

CONFIDENTIAL

WRIGHT, R 101

139

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds as Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, a his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was re-instated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 16, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited as Communist by the Attorney General.

The August, 1944, issue of the "Atlantic Monthly" published an article entitled "I Tried to be a Communist" in which Wright discussed his earliest experiences as a Communist Party member in Chicago and touched upon the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the Party. As a result considerable publicity was given Wright's articles in the "Daily Worker" newspaper. In his column entitled "New Times," published in the August 6, 1944, issue of the "Daily Worker," Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., referred to Wright and to what he called Wright's "public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communists." Davis referred to Wright's claim of withdrawing from the Communists in 1940, and asked why Wright waited until 1944 to make his break public. Davis inquired whom Wright was trying to impress and indicated that Wright's attitude was a form of super-leftism.

Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946 and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

670-

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

671

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright who had publicly renounced Communism, but he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (u)

On December 16, 1951, another Governmental agency conducting intelligence investigations reported that the Franco-American Fellowship Group was organized almost entirely by Richard Wright, American writer, 14 Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France, immediately after World War II, and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists, and poets who were students in France. At the time of its organization several of the students had made statements to the effect that the group was "leftist" in the nature of its discussions. According to the informant, Wright and his group were the targets of attacks from one James Baldwin, a young Negro writer who was a student in Paris. Baldwin attacked the hatred themes of the Wright writings and the attempt of the Franco-American Fellowship Group to perpetuate "Uncle Tom Literature Methods." (u)

On December 10, 1951, an American citizen, then living in Paris, advised that her niece, who was a student, had been invited to join the Franco-American Fellowship Group by Richard Wright, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. According to the informant, the niece attended one meeting of the organization and came to the conclusion that despite its denials of Communism, the group espoused the Communist Party line as the girl had known it in the United States. (u)

The foregoing information is furnished to you as the result of your request for an FBI file check and is not to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the individual involved. This information is furnished for your use and should not be disseminated outside of your agency.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

AIR TOUCH

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

15-356

RL
5-

From : Embassy PARIS

No. 2135

To : DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON

May 3, 1955

Ref :

Actr
EUR-
Info
RM/R-
NEA-1
SY-2
EUR/K
OLI-L
OIC-IP-1
IO-4 OCB-1
USIA-
CIA-1
ARM
NAV
AIR

RECEIVED FROM
MAY 18 1955
STATE DEPT OHB

Subject: First Congress of the Presence Africaine

(11)

SUMMARY

A Congress of Scholars of the Negro World, sponsored by the leftist Presence Africaine, is scheduled to take place in Paris September 19-22, 1955. Richard Wright, American negro on the Executive Committee of the Presence Africaine and former Communist Party member, believes that, through a careful selection of the American Delegation to the Congress, the leftist tendencies of the Congress can be neutralized. Mr. FIGUET, Political Advisor in the French Ministry of Overseas Territories, believes the importance of the Congress should not be underestimated and that every attempt should be made to preserve the orientation of the Presence Africaine to the West.

The Presence Africaine, which describes itself as a Cultural Review of the Black World, is a bimonthly publication, now in its seventh year. The founder and publisher of the Presence Africaine is Mr. Alioune DIOP, a rather liberal but strongly Catholic negro, formerly a resident of Dakar but now living in Paris. The orientation of the articles appearing in the Presence Africaine appears to be definitely to the left. Aine GESAIRE, Communist Deputy from Martinique and a poet, and Rene DUMESTRE, a Haitian and alleged to be a member of the Communist Party, are both contributing members of the Committee for Presence Africaine. Other Committee members include: A. ADAIDE, S. O. BOUTOU, A. BIYDI, A. E. DUSLA, B. D'ARIE, B. FILL, A. FRATELLI, H. Paulin JONCHIE, J. KI, Songat KUO, D. MUNDASSI, Isaac DAVIDSON, NYUMAI, OWONA, Ray AUVERA, A. SADJI, and A. WADE.

The Embassy has been informed that Presence Africaine for a time received a subsidy from the French Government which was subsequently discontinued because of the leftist anti-colonial and generally irresponsible nature of its editorial policy.

The December 1955-January 1956 issue of Presence Africaine carried, among its advertisements, "An Appeal to Black Writers and Artists", printed in both French and English, which constituted an open invitation to the Congress of Scholars of the Negro World, scheduled to take place in Paris, September 19-22, 1955. The invitation bore the names of eighteen people comprising the Executive Committee for the Congress. A mimeographed reprint of the invitation, copy of which is forwarded by enclosure (1) to this despatch, was subsequently addressed to the reporting officer. It will be noted that the United States members on the Executive Committee include Louis LOMAX, Josephine BAKER, and Richard WRIGHT.

PCJ:JDorman/33

OFFICE OF SP
NOT TO BE FILED
W.O. INITIALS 11 MAY 28 1955

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 104

100-157464-37

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 2
Dep. No. 215
Paris

On his own initiative, Mr. Wright called at the Embassy to express certain concern over the leftist tendencies of the Executive Committee for the Congress. He believed the members of the Committee were liberal thinkers and he thought there was a distinct danger that the Communists might exploit the Congress to their own ends. Many members of the Presence Africaine, he said, were in search of an ideal they could not obtain and as such would be fertile ground for Communist exploitation. To counteract such a tendency, Mr. Wright wondered if the Embassy could assist him in suggesting possible American negro delegates who are relatively well known for their cultural achievements and who could combat the leftist tendencies of the Congress. Mr. Wright, the Department will recall, was himself formerly a member of the Communist Party. He indicated that he was originally on the Committee of the Presence Africaine but that he had been dropped recently because of his present anti-Communist principles. However, Mr. Wright's name was retained on the list of hosts for the forthcoming Congress.

By coincidence, Dr. Francis M. HAMMOND, Minorities Affairs Adviser, Office of Policy and Programs, with USIA in Washington, was in Paris shortly after Mr. Wright's visit to the Embassy. Dr. Hammond kindly submitted the following names of possible delegates to the Congress, names which were subsequently turned over to Mr. Wright:

CARRER, Elmer A.

Address: 233 Broadway, N. Y. C.; Columnist; State Commission against Discrimination.

LEWIS, Theophilus

For ten years contributor to weekly magazine, "America".

REDDIE, Saunders

Professor of English at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; formerly held Leader Grant; author of "No Day of Triumph" and "An American in India".

ROBINSON, Rev. James H.

Minister of Presbyterian Church of the Master, 150th Street and Morningside Avenue, N. Y. C. Has written several books on Africa.

ROMAN, Carl

Writer; has held Leader Grant; representative for Minneapolis Star Tribune; attended Bandung Conference; has visited Africa; author of "The Pitiful and the Proud", due to be published in April, 1955.

SCHUYLER, George

New York editor of "Pittsburgh Courier"; anti-Communist editor in Negro Press; has traveled widely.

Mr. Wright appreciated the suggestions furnished him by the Embassy and added these names to a list of suggested delegates he had himself composed and had already

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 2
Desp. No. 215
Paris

On his own initiative, Mr. Wright called at the Embassy to express certain concern over the leftist tendencies of the Executive Committee for the Congress. He believed the members of the Committee were liberal thinkers and he thought there was a distinct danger that the Communists might exploit the Congress to their own ends. Many members of the Presence Africaine, he said, were in search of an ideal they could not obtain and as such would be fertile ground for Communist exploitation. To counteract such a tendency, Mr. Wright wondered if the Embassy could assist him in suggesting possible American negro delegates who are relatively well known for their cultural achievements and who could combat the leftist tendencies of the Congress. Mr. Wright, the Department will recall, was himself formerly a member of the Communist Party. He indicated that he was originally on the Committee of the Presence Africaine but that he had been dropped recently because of his present anti-Communist principles. However, Mr. Wright's name was retained on the list of hosts for the forthcoming Congress.

By coincidence, Dr. Francis M. HAMMOND, Minorities Affairs Adviser, Office of Policy and Programs, with USIA in Washington, was in Paris shortly after Mr. Wright's visit to the Embassy. Dr. Hammond kindly submitted the following names of possible delegates to the Congress, names which were subsequently turned over to Mr. Wright:

CARRER, Elmer A.

Address: 210 Broadway, N. Y. C.; Columnist; State Commission against Discrimination.

LEWIS, Theophilus

For ten years contributor to weekly magazine, "America".

REDDING, Saunders

Professor of English at Hampton Institute, Hampton, Virginia; formerly held Leader Grant; author of "No Day of Triumph" and "An American in India".

ROBINSON, Rev. James H.

Minister of Presbyterian Church of the Master, 150th Street and Morningside Avenue, N. Y. C. Has written several books on Africa.

ROMAN, Carl

Writer; has held Leader Grant; representative for "Minneapolis Star Tribune"; attended Bandung Conference; has visited Africa; author of "The Pitiful and the Proud", due to be published in April, 1951.

SCHUYLER, George

New York editor of "Pittsburgh Courier"; anti-Communist editor in Negro Press; has traveled widely.

Mr. Wright appreciated the suggestions furnished him by the Embassy and added these names to a list of suggested delegates he had himself composed and had already

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 3
Desp. No. 2135
Paris

forwarded to Mr. Ray WILKINS, Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Mr. Wright, in forwarding the list of names to Mr. Wilkins, suggested that Mr. Wilkins might work closely with the Department before sounding out each individual on his willingness to serve as a member of the American Delegation.

Mr. Wright's list included the following names:

ELLISON, Ralph

Novelist and former Salzburg Seminar lecturer, now writing in Italy on a prix-de-Rome.

HINES, Chester

Novelist from Ohio.

HUGHES, Langston

Poet, novelist, and author of children's stories.

ROGERS, J. A.

Popular historian from New York City.

ROWAN, Carl

Reporter for Minneapolis Star and Tribune

SMITH, William Gardner

Novelist and journalist; currently employed in Paris on Far Eastern Desk of Agence France Presse.

TOLSON, Melvin B.

Poet Laureate of Liberia; professor of English at Langston University, Oklahoma; son is Fulbright Fellow in Paris.

The works of Mr. Hines, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Smith, whose names appear in the above list, have been translated into French, as have the works of Mr. Wright.

Mr. Mike JOSSELSOHN, American Executive Secretary of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, has expressed considerable interest in the forthcoming Congress of the Presence Africaine and has called at the Embassy, on the suggestion of Mr. Wright, to discuss the implications and to offer his collaboration in combatting Communist influences.

Mr. Leon PIGNON, Political Adviser in the French Ministry of Overseas Territories, said he felt that the Presence Africaine represented an increasingly important group, a group of liberal thinkers who might well be led down the Communist path. Mr. Pignon felt that every effort should be made to orient the group toward the West. Mr. Pignon said he was glad that the Congress was scheduled to take place in Paris this year but he thought it likely that, unless appropriate steps were taken, next year's Congress might be held in Prague.

Enclosure:

Reprint of Presence Africaine, invitation
Dec., 1955-Jan., 1956 issue.

Robert P. Joyce
Counselor of Embassy

Embassy, nothing to be done to: CONFIDENTIAL
Re: P. 100-111111. Martinique.

WRIGHT, R.
106

144

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 1
Enclosure No.
Esp. No. 215
Paris

AN APPEAL TO BLACK WRITERS AND ARTISTS

For the first time in history, Negro Writers and Artists are going to take the initiative in meeting together and in ascertaining how they are situated and what their specific responsibilities in the world are.

Coloured men all the world over are of opinion that the liberation of the initiative of peoples must enrich human culture to no mean degree. Such a liberation enables man to be more fully conscious of the exact relationship between all beings. It is in man's nature to reveal his dimensions solely by self-expression and not by leaving it to others to express his real self. While techniques are finishing off the measuring of the world's total limits, it is art generated by the free-will of peoples that will delineate, the inmost aspects of non-European human groups. Capping the cultural appetites of our countries would have been unfair and impoverishing. Likewise it would have been harmful to science to willfully ignore a whole fraction of the animal, vegetable or mineral kingdom.

But it is not culture alone that will derive benefit from our free initiative. Peace of any kind remains unworkable if its formula does not integrate the real aspirations of peoples formerly considered as minors. All the same, they must be heard and recognized.

Hence the responsibility of the scholar. He is the animator of modern society, since his calling requires him to shed light on everyone's cultural vocation; in other words he has to reveal to and develop in everyone a sense of his solidarity with other men and the world.

The Negro World, the most neglected by history, is not the last to aspire after the exercise of its cultural responsibilities. Our civilizations, because they hadn't thought it fitting to engrave their laws on brass monuments, are reaping the rich disdain of others. If wedays, the expression of cultural life being necessary to the safeguard of any civilization, we feel more acutely than others the urgency of revealing ourselves to the world. And first of all, the urgency of introducing ourselves to each other.

Negro Scholars don't know each other. They have not yet taken up the measurements of their respective possibilities nor of their common lot. They are scattered and often isolated in surroundings where their personality is not sufficiently turned to profit.

Since nobody has yet assessed the whole contribution of Negroes to mankind's heritage, the task of describing it and defining the genius of their peoples is up to them.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 107

100 145

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Page 2
Enclosure No. 1
Desp. No. 2135
Paris

Only a Congress can face a task of such magnitude. This task is so important that the more one is representative by his talent and ability, the less he may evade it.

Artists, historians or poets, theologians, scientists, or thinkers, we are requesting you to take up your original mission in this our common task and examine together with us the following programme:

- 1) How Negroes of culture stand.
- 2) The contribution of Negroes to human culture.
- 3) Themes, styles, forms that typify our people's genius.
- 4) What relations are to be established with the modern world of culture.
- 5) What diffusion should be given to the works of authors.
- 6) Aid to young writers and artists.

The first Congress of Scholars of the Negro World will be held in Paris from the 19th to the 22nd September 1955.

Negro peoples and friendly ones are invited to uphold and help our undertaking, just as scholars of the Negro World are invited to back our plan by their signature and active cooperation.

Writers and Artists are invited to the Congress in mere consideration of their talent.

Peter ABRAMIS	(Afrique du Sud)
Louis ARSEROG	(U.S.A.)
Kofi ANTUBI	(Gold Coast)
Babib BENGIA	(Soudan)
Professor BUSIA	(Gold Coast)
Professor BICRAH	(Nigeria)
Josephine BAKER	(U.S.A.)
Aime CESAIRE	(Martinique)
Rene DEPOSTRE	(Haiti)
Cyprien EKEMSI	(Nigeria)
Ben ENJOBU	(Nigeria)
Mr. ELIAS	(Nigeria)
Raul IHAZOUNE	(Dahomey)
Rene KAPAH	(Martinique)
Davidson NICOL	(Sierra Leone)
Leopold Sedar SENGHOR	(Senegal)
Amos TUTUOLA	(Nigeria)
Richard WRIGHT	(U.S.A.)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

August 22, 1956

RICHARD WRIGHT *SUB MARY*
Born: September 4, 1908
Natchez, Mississippi

MAILED
AUG 23 1956
NAME CHECK

Reference is made to your request for copies of
investigative reports in the event the captioned individual
has been investigated by this Bureau.

In response to your request, there are attached
six reports in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright,
which appear to relate to the subject of your inquiry.
(100-157464)

In addition, you are referred to the memorandum
entitled "Richard Wright," dated July 8, 1954, which was
previously furnished to your agency.

The foregoing information is furnished to you as
a result of your request for an FBI file check and is not
to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the
individual involved. This information is furnished for
your use and should not be disseminated outside of your
agency.

Enclosures (6)

and one to USIA
8-7-56

CAA ccc

USIA, requested a search for main file
that only copies of investigative reports of the
investigation were requested. Reason for request
People-to-People Partnership (formerly President
World Understanding). *100-157464*

EX-126 RECORDED - 55
INDEXED - 55
AUG 23 1956

WRIGHT, R. 109

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Reporting Office WASHINGTON FIELD	Office of Origin NEW YORK	Date 4/17/58	Investigative Period 3/18, 20/58
TITLE OF CASE RICHARD WRIGHT		Report made by [REDACTED] b7c	Typed By: bsb
		CHARACTER OF CASE SECURITY MATTER - C	

Synopsis:

On 2/13/58, at American Embassy, Paris, France, subject executed a sworn statement in which he stated he had been a member of the Communist Party from 1932 to 1942. He previously submitted detailed sworn statement at Paris on 9/16/54, in which he stated his disaffiliation with the Communist Party came about because of a series of ideological disputes with communist officials. On 2/13/58, subject executed application for passport at Paris, France, in which he stated he has resided outside the United States since September, 1949, and that his date of return to the United States is indefinite. On 2/21/58, Department of State authorized issuance of passport to subject.

- RUC

DETAILS: AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

On March 18, 1958, Miss MARY BARRY, Legal Section, Passport Office, Department of State, made available to SA [REDACTED] the passport file of RICHARD WRIGHT. A review of that file disclosed the following information:

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJB/bc

Approved TJMY	Special Agent in Charge	Do not write in spaces below	
Copies made: 4-Bureau 3-New York (RM) 1-Washington Field (100-15433)		100-157464-39	REC-1
COPIES DESTROYED 158 AUG 10 1960		12 APR 8 1958	EX-126
1-9-67 2 Xerox made with Paris file 12/10/66 see those attached to it.		b2, b7c	
APR 21 1958		[REDACTED]	

This report is loaned to you by the FBI, and neither it nor its contents are to be distributed outside the agency to which loaned

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

R. K. 4

MAILED
JUL 28 1955
NAME CHECK

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

July 27, 1955

RICHARD WRIGHT *Summary*
Born: September 4, 1908
Natchez, Mississippi

Richard Wright

In response to your name check request, you are referred to FBI investigative reports furnished your agency in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright; Internal Security - C" furnished your agency on October 25, 1944, concerning the subject of your name check request.

Transmitted herewith is an FBI investigative report in the case entitled "Richard Nathaniel Wright; Security Matter - C" concerning the subject of your name check request.

On October 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be within the Stalin Solar System."

AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) ON *Class*
DATE *10-21-51*

[REDACTED]

b1
b7D

On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds As Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered

Tolson _____
Boardman _____
Nichols _____
Belmont _____
Harbo _____
Mohr _____
Parsons _____
Rosen _____
Tamm _____
 Sizoo _____
Winterrowd _____
Tele. Room _____
Holloman _____
Gandy _____

Original and one to G-2

Reg. Rec'd: 7/6/55

[REDACTED] hrb

(4)
Enclosure

RECORDED - 81

INDEXED - 81

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP8 BT/6*
REASON - FCIM II 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81*

60 AUG 4

WRIGHT, R. M

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communist in Chicago was broken in 1937, when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was reinstated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 18, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers, advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited by the Attorney General of the United States pursuant to Executive Order 10450.

The August, 1944, issue of the "Atlantic Monthly" (100-157464-5) published an article entitled "I Tried to be a Communist" in which Wright discussed his earliest experiences as a Communist Party member in Chicago and touched upon the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the Party. As a result considerable publicity was given Wright's articles in the "Daily Worker" newspaper. In his column entitled "New Times," published in the August 6, 1944, issue of the "Daily Worker," Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., referred to Wright and to what he called Wright's "public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communist." Davis referred to Wright's claim of withdrawing from the Communist in 1940, and asked why Wright waited until 1944 to make his break public. Davis inquired whom Wright was trying to impress and indicated that Wright's attitude was a form of super-leftism.

Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946, and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

67D

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

[REDACTED] b7D

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright and it was the informant's opinion that even though Wright had publically renounced Communism, he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (u)

b7D per Army
per Army letter
1-8-52

[REDACTED] (100-157464-31)

On December 16, 1951, another Governmental agency conducting intelligence investigations reported that the Franco - American Fellowship Group was organized almost entirely by Richard Wright, American writer, 14 Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France, immediately after World War II, and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists, and poets who were students in France. At the time of its organization several of the students had made statements to the effect that the group was "Leftist" in the nature of its discussions. According to the informant, Wright and his group were the targets of attacks from one James Baldwin, a young Negro writer who was a student in Paris. Baldwin attacked the hatred themes of the Wright's writings and the attempt of the Franco - American Fellowship Group to Perpetuate "Uncle Tom Literature Methods." (u)

On December 10, 1951, an American citizen, then living in Paris, advised that her niece, who was a student, had been invited to join the Franco - American Fellowship Group by Richard Wright, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. According to the informant, the niece attended one meeting of the organization and came to the conclusion that despite its denials of Communism, the group espoused the Communist Party line as the girl had known it in the United States. (u)

[REDACTED] (100-157464-32)

b7D per Army

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

The foregoing information is furnished to you as the result of a request for an FBI file check and is not to be construed as a clearance or a nonclearance of the individual involved. This information is furnished for your use and should not be disseminated outside of your agency.

- 4 -

WRIGHT, R. 116

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

126

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP8 BTG/lca*
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-81*

July 8, 1954

G.L.R. - 9 MAIL
JUL 8
NAME CH.

CONFIDENTIAL RICHARD WRIGHT

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY SLIP(S) OF
DATE *10-21-81*

Reference is made to your specific request for information reflecting captioned individuals defection from the Communist Party.

A review of our files reflects that a security-type investigation was conducted during 1943-1946 on a Richard Nathaniel Wright, who is identical with the captioned individual. Wright was born on September 4, 1908, in Natchez, Mississippi. He claims eight years of elementary school education and professes experience as a novelist, playwright, poet, and newspaper reporter. In 1935 he worked on the Federal Writers Project in Chicago and sold articles and short stories to magazines. In 1937 he worked on the same project in New York City. At that time he also did some work for the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses." Both of these publications have been cited as organs of the Communist Party by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, January 3, 1939.

On March 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin solar system"

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE *10-21-81* BY *SP8 BTG/lca*

[REDACTED]

Note: USIA requested additional information and Richard Wright in connection with USIA employee [REDACTED] USIA specifically requested information re Communist Party defection by Wright [REDACTED]

Orig. USIA
Req. Rec: 6/14/54
Tele. Room
Holloman
Miss Gandy

RECORDED-100

JUL 13 1954

WRIGHT, R. 115

-X-12

~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~ - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

88344

~~SECRET~~

NOTE TO SAC's Chicago, Los Angeles, Mobile, and New York

For the assistance of all offices receiving copies of instant communication, there is attached a copy of a self-explanatory memorandum dated November 20, 1953, which was received from the Department as well as a copy of the petition filed by the Attorney General with the Subversive Activities Control Board seeking to cause the registration of the captioned organization.

Bureau files reflect that each of the individuals referred to in the attachment is well known to the office in the area in which he is believed to reside.

In the absence of any information in your files which would make such action inadvisable, Bureau authority is granted to conduct the requested interviews.

In view of the distinct possibility that the hearing relative to the captioned organization before the Subversive Activities Control Board will commence in the near future, it is desired that the results of your action in this regard be submitted in memorandum form suitable for dissemination to the Department to reach the Bureau no later than December 17, 1953.

- 2 -

~~SECURITY INFORMATION~~ - ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~SECRET~~

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1 with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
100-157464-34

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

RECORDED-45

~~SECRET~~

August 22, 1953

RICHARD WRIGHT

10053

[REDACTED] (S) **bl**

In answer to your inquiry set forth in reference communication, we have no objection to your furnishing information previously furnished by us concerning Richard Wright, providing that we are in no way indicated as the source of the information. You are further advised that the identity of the sources furnishing the information contained in our memorandum to you cannot be divulged.

Rev 171253 084
2 - Legal Attache
London, England

1 - Foreign Service Desk

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

EXCLUDED FROM DIVISION FIVE
AUG 13 1953

~~SECRET~~

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP8 BT/ace
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-25-1001
8-25-81

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-21-87

Tolson _____
Ladd _____
Nichols _____
Belmont _____
Clegg _____
Glavin _____
Harbo _____
Rosen _____
Tracy _____
Mohr _____
Tele. Rm. _____
Nease _____
Gandy _____

WRIGHT, R. 118

b7D
SECRET

[REDACTED]

An individual who lives in Paris, France, advised in December, 1951, that Wright retained his United States citizenship and lived off his book royalties from American sales. He reported that he had attended a meeting which was a "Communist front" and which was generally critical of American policies, racial and foreign. This meeting was attended by Wright and it was the informant's opinion that even though Wright had publicly renounced Communism, he was as much a Communist as he had ever been. (U)

b7D per Army [REDACTED] 100-157464-31)
On December 16, 1951, an unidentified source reported that the Franco-American Fellowship Group was organized almost entirely by Richard Wright, American writer, 14 Monsieur Le Prince, Paris, France, immediately after World War II, and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists, and poets who were students in France. At the time of its organization several of the students had made statements to the effect that the group was "leftist" in the nature of its discussions. According to the informant, Wright and his group were the targets of attacks from one James Baldwin, a young Negro writer who was a student in Paris. Baldwin attacked the hatred themes of the Wright writings and the attempt of the Franco-American Fellowship Group to perpetuate "Uncle Tom Literature Methods." (U)

(U. S. Army; 100-157464-32)
On December 10, 1951, an American citizen, then living in Paris, advised that her niece, who was a student, had been invited to join the Franco-American Fellowship Group by Richard Wright, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. According to the informant, the niece attended one meeting of the organization and came to the conclusion that despite its denials of Communism, the group espoused the Communist Party line as the girl had known it in the United States. (U)

b7D
per
Army

[REDACTED] 100-157464-32)

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

On July 28, 1944, the New York "Herald Tribune" published an article entitled "Negro Article Criticized Reds as Intolerant" in which Wright was reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early part of 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when, he said, he was "ejected" from the Party. Wright stated that he was reinstated in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940. However, Wright's name appeared frequently in the "Daily Worker" during 1941 and 1942. Wright was reported to be a member of the American Committee to Save Refugees as of March 6, 1942, and on September 18, 1942, he was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers advocating a second front for Europe. The American Committee to Save Refugees has been cited as a Communist front by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities Report of March 29, 1944, and the League of American Writers has been cited as Communist by the Attorney General.

(C-2; 100-157464-5, 13)

The August, 1944, issue of the "Atlantic Monthly" published an article entitled "I Tried to be a Communist" in which Wright discussed his earliest experiences as a Communist Party member in Chicago and touched upon the problems he faced in trying to present his own ideas to the Party. As a result, considerable publicity was given Wright's articles in the "Daily Worker" newspaper. In his column entitled "New Times," published in the August 6, 1944, issue of the "Daily Worker," Benjamin J. Davis, Jr., referred to Wright and to what he called Wright's "public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communists." Davis referred to Wright's claim of withdrawing from the Communists in 1940, and asked why Wright waited until 1944 to make his break public. Davis inquired whom Wright was trying to impress and indicated that Wright's attitude was a form of super-leftism.

Wright was classified as 4-F during World War II because of a severe psycho-neurosis. His interest in the problems of the Negro was almost an obsession. (100-157464-15)

Wright left the United States for France in May, 1946, and there is no indication in our files reflecting that he has ever returned to the United States.

[REDACTED]

b7D

1 - Ladd
1 - Mr. Belmont

July 17, 1953

SECRET

CLASS. & EXT. BY: SP8 BT/164
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2, 1-2.4.3
DATE OF REVIEW: 8-25-91
8-25-81

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING

SLIP(S) OF class
DATE 10-21-81

RICHARD WRIGHT

9999

A review of our files reflects that a security-type investigation was conducted during 1943-1946 on a Richard Nathan Wright, who is identical with the captioned individual. Wright was born on September 4, 1908, in Natchez, Mississippi. He claims eight years of elementary school education and professes experience as a novelist, playwright, poet, and newspaper reporter. In 1935 he worked on the Federal Writers Project in Chicago and sold articles and short stories to magazines. In 1937 he worked on the same project in New York City. At that time he also did some work for the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses." Both of these publications have been cited as organs of the Communist Party by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, January 3, 1939.

(100-157464)
On March 21, 1942, Wright's name appeared on the list of the "Committee to Free Earl Browder," which was published in the March 21, 1942, issue of the "People's Voice." The "People's Voice" has been cited by the California Committee on Un-American Activities, Report, 1948, as among the publications found "to be Communist initiated and controlled or so strongly influenced as to be in the Stalin solar system."

[REDACTED]

SECRET

RECORDED - 91
INDEXED - 91

2 - Legal Attache
London, England
1 - Foreign Liaison Unit

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 10-21-81 BY 676

JUL 21 1953

WRIGHT, R. 121

Director, FBI

Re:

INTERNAL SECURITY - R

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONFIDENTIAL

88346

It should be noted that whereas RICHARD WRIGHT continues to maintain an anti-Stalinist position since his expulsion from the CPUSA, he has wittingly or not been serving Communist propaganda ends by frequent contributions to neutralist publications such as L'Observateur and particularly by his insistence on portraying abroad only the seamy side of the race question in the United States. While flirting with Titoism and Sartre-ism, he has maintained a position, so far as the East-West conflict is concerned, tantamount to 'a plague on both your houses.' [REDACTED] with WRIGHT has been close, and although it is possible that their political philosophies are much alike, [REDACTED] background as well as his writings indicate the likelihood of a discreet tie-in with the Stalinist camp itself, which is not the case with WRIGHT. [REDACTED]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
CONFIDENTIAL

WRIGHT, R. 122

American Embassy
2 Avenue Gabriel
Paris 8, France

~~SECRET~~ - AIR COURIER

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

DECLASSIFIED ON...

88345

March 3, 1952

Director, FBI

Legal Attache, Paris

INTERNAL SECURITY - R

CLASS. & EXT. BY...
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW... 8-25-97

Following is a copy of a Confidential Despatch, prepared by Mr. William A. Crawford, Political Section, American Embassy, under date of February 21, 1952; concerning the above subject;

67C
APR 18 1952

NOT RECORDED
147 APR 15 1952

CONFIDENTIAL

WRIGHT, R. 123

Region II, 6th CIC Detachment, APO SF, 94000

3 January, 1952

II-F-512

MEMO, Richard D.

Far as they have been able to discover, the group was devoting all of its time to very uncontrolled discussion of the kind of that were wrong with the United States. Some of the members of the group (Francis American Fellowship Group) frequented the Chess Club and were recognized as Communist Party members. It was stated that a Willie [redacted] known as a newspaper reporter, was also one of the most interested members. BUT a girl lives with a white woman who formerly worked for the American Information Section of Armed Forces Information Station. [redacted] stated that this woman had been since treasurer of Communist Party activities. [redacted] who has a narrow view to military reservation in Germany, is a fool that these people are and exploit. [redacted] stated that [redacted] stated that, if one has a lot of money, loyalty elsewhere, it was better to stay away from the group and the Fellowship Group. [redacted] stated that [redacted] has learned that no one of the State Department in my pocket-the call in for conferences, the focus.

((3))

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 6 1988
BY CDR USAINSDM/FOIRP
WITH Para 1-503 CDD 5200. 2PR

4 - No. [redacted] [redacted]
2 - [redacted] Central [redacted]

2 - CIC Central File
2 - [redacted] [redacted]

WRIGHT, R. 124

125

SECURITY INFORMATION
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3 January 1952

Corica II, 6th Air Detachment, 470 St. W. Army, II-7-512

WRIGHT, Richard D.

York) with cocktails, literary conversation and jazz, just like a novel by
H.D. Thoreau.

The magazine, "The New York Review", which includes among the Board of Directors such
illustrious names as Jean-Paul Sartre, Richard Wright, William Faulkner,
Tennessee Williams, Stuart Gilbert, etc., is a magazine devoted to "young writers"
and more over 35 will be accepted as contributors.

Under the auspices of the magazine, a jury composed of Jean-Paul Sartre,
Richard Wright, Stuart Gilbert, and others, will award the prize in July to the best published work of an American or
French writer. The very attractive prize will be a month's trip to Paris or New
York, depending on the nationality of the winner.

On 12 December 1951, [redacted] (b-2)
[redacted] stated that a colored man named (SNU)/[redacted] stated to [redacted] that
one (SNU) [redacted] employed by the American Express Company was running out
Communist literature at the American Express Company and had been seen giving
this literature to military personnel. [redacted] had identified [redacted] as a member
of the Communist Group of artists and writers that Richard Wright has organized
in Paris. A man named [redacted], receptionist for Mr. (SNU) [redacted], Vice-
President of the American Express, has been used by these people to secure entry to
in France on a "faked passport".

On 12 December 1951, [redacted] (b-6)
[redacted] made the following statement in substance:
Richard Wright is active in the Communist Party in France and has been
employed in Paris in the Communist territory through the Franco-American Fellowship
Ship Trust. Mr. Richard Wright is the active Communist leader of the family
and has made a point of insulting Negro personnel who hold views other than
Communist. [redacted] has known Wright since his first appearance in Paris. Wright
was invited to France by the French Government at the instigation of the Communist
Group of the Government. Wright organized the Franco-American Fellowship
Ship Trust, held lectures, meetings, and the like. Among the latter discussed
was the "mangers of Wall Street Capitalism". Wright asked [redacted] to join the
organization but, inasmuch as Wright did not join any [redacted] was not accepted.
[redacted] however, was one who was working for the [redacted] (Paris Fight Club)
at the time did join the Franco-American Fellowship Ship Trust. [redacted] and [redacted]
[redacted] and Al [redacted]. Three men attended the meeting and reported that, as
(continued)

4 - Mr. T. C. C. [redacted]
1 - Central [redacted]

1 - C. C. Central [redacted]
1 - Mr. [redacted]

WRIGHT, R. 125

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

3 January 1952

2-1-51

The below is a winner of the Peace Award for 1955, Earl Browder, Director of the Department of the CP Director. It was received by the American League Against Racial Discrimination and Anti-Semitism yesterday evening. In the presence of Katharine Hunter, Richard Wright, the "Royal" Paul Robeson, Harry Belafonte, etc., he was given some \$2,000 francs, collected by the L.A.A.S. for the widow and the children of Louis (Willie Brown), the negro American recently executed for his "rape" a white woman.

(2-خ)

The "concerning" the donation" and rather unlike to me. The idea, I suppose, is to attract notice of the work. I can't imagine any other - but your writer tells, - unless of waiters, electric attendants, or the like. -

On Sunday, 24 December 1951. I am in a translation (is?)

(7-2)

...a French Edition.
...without ...
...photographed w.o. ...
...other ...

(continued)

2 - CTR Control File
2 - R-5 IT File

127

WRIGHT, R. 126

REGRADIT UNCLASSIFIED
ON. JAN 6, 1988
BY CDR USAINSDOM FOR
Auth Para : 503 DOD 5200. 13

3 January 1952

Region II, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF, US Army II-T-511

FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP

On 16 December 1951, the following information concerning SUBJECT was given:

The FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP was organized almost entirely by Richard WRIGHT, American writer, 11 Boulevard Le Prince, PARIS, France, immediately after the war (WW II), and was supposed to be a sponsorship for young writers, artists and poets who were students in France. WRIGHT, whose works are widely read in France and have been translated into most European languages, was supposed to be the "Patron of Art" and arrange soldier and affairs that were to be international in character to effect the introduction of the Americans and their French counterparts. At the inception of the group, WRIGHT and the management of Chez Inez (Inez CITIZEN, 41 "Tate" ST. PARIS, and 11/11/1951) were very friendly and met with the youngsters, particularly the music crowd, came to Chez Inez. WRIGHT met many of the youngsters and invited them to the affairs that the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP sponsored, such as dances, parties, readings, and occasional parties. Even at that time, several of the students made statements to the effect that the group was "leftist" in the nature of its discussions and that the members who defended the French and American concept of democracy were not given the same hearings as the "Trotskyists" and "left" partisans. Many of the social affairs were failures and later (especially in the last year) most of the American students, the "Tatary Crowd" (identified as Americans who are tourists and RCA, Marshall Plan employees, and military (MIA) members) have completely avoided the WRIGHT group as one that is more "left" than not. The principal members of the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP have been identified as Richard WRIGHT, Jay WRIGHT, retired American Customs official, and about 7, 47 Rue Clichy, PARIS, France; (son) WRIGHT, American Express employee; Bob WRIGHT, American Express Company; and Jean-Paul WRIGHT, founder of the "Trotskyist" Movement. Lately there has been a break between the Chez Inez personnel and the WRIGHT group because WRIGHT tested them (the Chez Inez group) for his movie "Native Son", which was made in South American and then did not employ any of them in the picture. WRIGHT and his group have been the targets of attacks from one JACQUES ALBERT, young negro writer who is a student in PARIS, having come over on a scholarship given by the American Publishing Company. ALBERT attacks the hatred themes of the WRIGHT writings and the attempt of the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OR UP to promulgate "Uncle Tom Literature" when the day has come for a more "realistic and analytical" approach to the American Negro Problem.

On 20 December 1951, [redacted] Tourist [redacted] New York, now living at Hotel Crystal, 25 Ave. de la Concorde, PARIS, France, volunteered the following information in substance: (continued)

4 - HQ. [redacted] [redacted]
2 - CIC Central Reg.

2 - CIC Central File
2 - Reg. II File

WRIGHT, [redacted]
127

100-157464-32

100-157464-32

100-157464-32 enclosure

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 6, 1988
BY [redacted]
Auth PWS 1-603 DOD 5200-108

(5-6) b7D
Per
Army

SECURITY INFORMATION

Region II, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF, SC Army 7-511

3 January 1952

FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP
OF-UP

A niece of PRIEST is an art student in the Commercial Art School of the Cite University of Paris and has been in PARIS since February 1951. When the niece first came to PARIS, she was invited to join the FRANCO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP OF-UP by Richard WRIGHT, who stated that the group was composed of "militant persons" interested in the welfare of the American Negro. WRIGHT stressed that the group was not a Communist Organization, but solely a "militant group". PRIEST's niece attended one meeting and came to the conclusion, from the chatter of the uncontrolled meeting, that it was chaotic rather than militant and, despite the denial of Communist label, was a group that certainly crossed the Communist line as the girl had heard it in the United States. PRIEST stated that her niece had not returned to any of the meetings and that she (PRIEST) was not anxious to meet Richard WRIGHT.

(P-6)

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 6 1988
BY CDR USAF/SCOM FOIPO
Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200. 1-R

4 - No. 1007 CO. 2
2 - CJC Central Rec
SECURITY INFORMATION
3 - CJC Central File
2 - Reg. II File

WRIGHT, R.
128



United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.

IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO
FILE NO. _____

Liaison Office
Heidelberg, Germany

CONFIDENTIAL

Date: February 4, 1952

~~SECRET~~ - ARMY COURIER

To: Director, FBI

From: [REDACTED]

Subject: GERMANO-AMERICAN FELLOWSHIP GROUP
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

b7c

Attached for the Bureau's information is one copy of a Region IX 66th CIC Detachment report dated January 3, 1952 regarding the above captioned group. Also attached is one copy of a report dated January 3, 1952, also prepared by Region IX, regarding RICHARD D. WRIGHT organizer of the captioned group. One copy of each of these reports is being furnished to the LEGAT, Paris, France with a copy of this letter. (u)

No further action is contemplated in this matter by CIC but any additional information which may be received will be forwarded.

cc - Paris (Encl-2) VIA AIR POUCH
Encl. -2

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

EXPEDITED PROCESSING
FEB 25 1952

ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF
DATE 10-2-81

100-ny
3-11-52

RECORDED - 159

100-157464-82
MAR 13 1952

SE 47

INDEXED - 159

CONFIDENTIAL

CLASS. & EXT. BY
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-91

APR 3 1952

WRIGHT, R. 129

100-157464-

b7c

129

SAC, New York (100-41674)

February 19, 1952

Director, FBI (100-157464) - 3/

RECORDED-39

RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Transmitted herewith is a copy of a letter dated January 8, 1952, with enclosures, from the Bureau's Liaison Office, Heidelberg, Germany. **b7c**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

This is for your information.

Enclosure

ald

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY 8887/ku

RECEIVED - CIVIL BOOK

FEB 18 5 34 PM '52

- Tolson _____
- Ladd _____
- Nichols _____
- Belmont _____
- Clegg _____
- Glavin _____
- Harbo _____
- Rosen _____
- Tracy _____
- Mohr _____
- Tele. Rm. _____
- Nease _____
- Gandy _____

247

MAILED 4
FEB 19 1952
COMM. - FBI

WRIGHT, R. 130

b7c

110

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET10

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☐ Deleted under exemption(s) _____ with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☒ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) Central Intelligence Agency, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
100-157464-30

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
X DELETED PAGE(S) X
X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
X FOR THIS PAGE X
XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 131

STATE
INFORMATION

DATE 6-13-50

The Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

FROM:

NAME OF PERSON OR FIRM

WRIGHT, Richard

DATE OF BIRTH

9-4-08

PLACE OF BIRTH

Wichita, Miss.

RACE

SEX

ALIASES AND NICKNAMES

ADDRESS

OCCUPATION

EMPLOYER

TYPE OF INFORMATION DESIRED

- ☐ All information
☐ Derogatory

CITIZENSHIP STATUS

NAT. CERT. NO.

MARITAL STATUS

NAME OF ORGANIZATION

HEADQUARTERS ADDRESS

REPLY

- ☐ Material attached
☐ No record
☐ No derogatory information
☐ Other

OSTENSIBLE PURPOSE

NAMES OF LEADERS OR SPONSORS OR AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ANSWERED BY REPORT

1-11-43 2-9-43 at n.y.
5-28-43 at n.y.
6-9-44 at n.y.
7-8-44 at n.y.
9-5-44 at n.y.
6-18-46 at n.y.

100-157464-

100-157464-

DATE

CHECKED BY

298

100-157464

113

WRIGHT, R. 132

Region II, 66th CIC Detachment, APO SF US Army

4 December 1951

File: II-F-429

On the 29 November 1951, [REDACTED]

made in substance the following statement:

[REDACTED] is a member of the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) and several other musical composer groups which is mentioned in the course of conversation. [REDACTED] stated that, at the time when he first planned his trip abroad, the groups had been very cooperative in aiding him and had promised an advance payment on royalties to tide over SOURCE until the next period of royalty payments. (SUBJECT stated that the arrangement is for the composers to put all collection of royalties into the hands of the musicians groups and then these groups pay monthly allotments to the composers; these allotments are dependent upon the payment of royalties for arrangements by the composers but a deposit is retained and a fund built up to assure payments over a period of years when the music composer is no longer popular.) Suddenly, on the day prior to the departure date of SOURCE, the promised check was received but was neither the amount promised nor requested by SOURCE. SOURCE stated that he tried to find out why there had been a sudden change in the attitude of the group; he was told that the music groups saw no reason why he should come over-seas, and there had been a hesitancy to allot money to him to be used for a trip at the time. SOURCE suspected that such was due to the fact that he had complained to the "White House" in a personal letter about some subversive activities of the groups to which he belonged. SOURCE stated that it had seemed to him that LOU LUTY, husband of one of the Andrew Sisters, had made a great effort to "push" some composers who were Russian and others who were very pro-Communist. SOURCE is of the opinion that funds paid to Russian composers as such was every good cover to transfer dollar credits to the Soviet government; he further said that he had written a letter to the White House calling attention to the preferential treatment given to these pro-Communist members of the composers. A lot more of the same tenor followed.

b7D
per
Army

Then SOURCE stated that after reaching France he had used the American Express as a mailing address. Furthermore, he had asked one (1) of the French girls who worked at the American Express to give personal attention to his mail so that it would be forwarded to him on a planned trip to KOLZ. [REDACTED] arrived in France in June, went to England in August, and had been in Paris continuously since September. [REDACTED] stated that he had arranged to meet the girl and to make a financial arrangement with her on Monday, 26 November 1951; however, on Friday or Saturday, 23 or 24 Nov 51, Richard WRIGHT had held a

(continued)

4 - Hqs., EUCON COM 2
2 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File
1 - Region II File

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

100-157464-3

WRIGHT, R. 134

100-157464-3/enclosure 116

RECEIVED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 16, 1988
BY CDR U.S. NAVY
Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200. 147



United States Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, D. C.



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO

FILE NO. _____

Liaison Office
Heidelberg, Germany

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Date: January 8, 1952

~~SECRET~~ - ARMY COURIER

To: John Edgar Hoover, Director
Federal Bureau of Investigation

From: George A. VanNoy

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT;

~~SECURITY MATTER - C~~

Attached for the Bureau's information and for the information of the Legal Attache, Paris, France are two copies of a report dated December 4, 1951, prepared by Region IX, 66th CIC Detachment which sets out information furnished by [redacted] JAW

b7D per Army

Encls.
cc - Paris (encl.)

CLASS. & EXT. BY *SP8 BTJ/ble*
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW *8-25-91*
8-25-81

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP *class*
DATE *10-21-81* *mg*

RECORDED - 96

INDEXED - 96

SE 39

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 133

115

DOI dtd 4 Dec 51; Reg IX, 66th CIC Det;

SUBJ: [REDACTED]

MEMBER of the ASAC, [REDACTED] receives mail in care of the American Express Company, Paris as he had moved several times, largely because he has not paid his rent; he gave the explanation that checks were sent to him from the US on schedule but time periods exceeded amount of cash on hand so that SOURCE was forced to move often; Afterwards he would catch up on the bills when his checks arrived.

2. SOURCE seemed sincere and sounded much more coherent than the written report seems to indicate. SOURCE volunteered the information, explaining that he was seeking money or any remuneration but wanted to do his patriotic duty. One thing seemed strange — that was the anti-Semitic tone of his statements. SOURCE referred to Col. MCCORMICK as a "great American" and expressed approval of the editorial policies of that section of the American press. SOURCE seemed to be well versed in the attachment of various persons to Communist groups and promised that any proof of the statements or suspicions which he could obtain would be gladly given to Military Intelligence.

b7D
per
Army

3. Department of Veterans Affairs, US Embassy, Paris, verified that there is a record of one [REDACTED] said record will be searched for information.

4. It is possible that SOURCE may have a "mental quirk" which would account for the attempt of the Society of Composers to keep him in America. Yet a word to the Passport section would have accomplished this. Intriguing matter and the information given reference 429 ties in with the original information.

4 - Hqs., EUCOM COM 2
1 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File
1 - Region IX File

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 16 1988
BY CDN USARP COM FOIPO
Auth Para 1-603 DoD 5200.1-R

SECURITY INFORMATION

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 136.

SOI dtd 4 Dec 51; Reg IX, 66th CIC Det;

SUBJ: [REDACTED]

meeting of a fellowship organization of American and French artists, writers, theatrical people, and others at the house of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] attended the meeting at the invitation of CLIFFORD and there saw the French woman employee of the American Express. She told SOURCE that the meeting was a communist front and that she did not belong but had only come out of deference to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] stated that he had observed the meeting and the tenor of the conversation which had been generally critical of the American policies, racial and foreign. SOURCE expressed the opinion that WRIGHT, who has publicly avowed Communist leanings, is as much a communist as he ever had been. [REDACTED] stated that the French girl came to him early on Monday morning, 26 Nov 51, and stated that it would be impossible for her to keep the planned appointment with SOURCE as "something" had come up. [REDACTED] stated that one of the persons at the meeting had probably told the girl to avoid him because of the fact that he is considered a "stool-pigeon" for anti-subversive persons. [REDACTED] did not know who this could have been but suspected that Richard WRIGHT would have been in an ideal position to do this as WRIGHT was a friend of Paul ROBESON and Mrs. ROBESON and at one time Mrs. ROBESON had asked [REDACTED] to help in getting a script sold at the Warner Brothers Studio. SOURCE had taken the script in and offered it to the Warner script department but had been told that "he should stick to writing music and let the Red element alone."

b7D
per
Army

[REDACTED] stated that WRIGHT had made a picture in South America early this year and since has lost a lot of money promoting a dance group. WRIGHT had asked [REDACTED] to write more music for a new show which WRIGHT wanted to do in order to recoup his fortune. [REDACTED] was of the opinion that WRIGHT, who has kept his US citizenship and lives off book royalties from American sales, does not receive the whole-hearted cooperation of the French or Americans who are renouncing their US citizenship and working in France. SOURCE is of the opinion that the same persons who attempted to block his trip abroad have warned the subversive elements in Paris to watch SOURCE'S personal contacts and keep him from gathering any information which would reveal their activities. Among the discoveries which SOURCE made was that his music was being played in France and that the French agencies had been paying royalties to the American Society of Composers for twenty (20) years in his account. [REDACTED] explained that his trip to England was to spend the royalties which could not be taken from that country (in excess of twenty-eight (28) pounds sterling).

AGENTS NOTES:

7-6

(continued)

4 - Hqs., EUCOM COM 2
1 - CIC Central Registry

1 - CIC Central File
1 - Region IX File

SECURITY INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIAL

WRIGHT, R. 135

117

DECLASSIFIED
ON JAN 16 1988
BY CTS-USA/INCOM/FOIPO

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

July 20, 1945

[REDACTED]
c/o General Delivery
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sir:

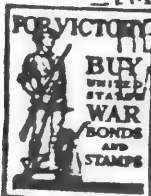
This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated July 4, 1945 with enclosures.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully noted, and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate with the Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States Department of Justice, 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Very truly yours,

J. E. Hoover
John Edgar Hoover
Director



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/buf

52 AUG 20 1945

*race hat
indicated in
writing*

*b7C
HWC.
Returned unclaimed
VSC*

File-5-RK

WRIGLEY R.

137

259

RECORDED EOD
100-157464-22

EX-40

July 20, 1945

D76

c/o General Delivery
Los Angeles, California

Dear Sir:

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated July 4, 1945,
with enclosures.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully noted, and
I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe
to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate with
the Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States
Department of Justice, 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 88167/bw

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 14
★ JUL 21 1945 P.M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

WRIGHT, R
138

50 JUL 28 1945

13
JUL 20 4 45 PM '45
U. S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
RECEIVED
JUL 20 1945

102

100-157464

mer

674

Mr. James M. McInerney
Acting Head, Criminal Division

PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL

July 6, 1945

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD WRIGHT

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated
June 18, 1945, received from [REDACTED]
Los Angeles, California.

This matter is being referred to you as a matter of
possible interest.

b7c

CC: Assistant Attorney General Herbert Wechsler, War Division

Enclosure

RECORDED

EX-62

100-157464-23
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
JUL 11 1945
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Carson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn Tamm
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED

DECLASSIFIED BY SP8BJR/bu

CN

8-25-81

Let's go
g7H

b7c

WRIGHT:R139

765
JUL 1 1945 234

101

BURKHONG, to, Mr. N. N. Jey!
DALLAS, TEXAS

4436 Hall Street,
September 27, 1945

Mr. J. Edgar Hoover,
Federal Bureau of Investigation,
Washington, D. C.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1-25-81 BY SP-01/100

Dear Sir:

I have looked over the book "Black Boy", supposedly written by a negro called Richard Wright, and published by Harper & Brothers, New York City. I consider this book to be very racially inflammatory.

The publicity given to this book during the last few months is scarcely less than amazing. A while back (I do not know the exact issue, but believe was during June, July or early August) the book "Black Boy" was publicized, with vivid picturization, in "Life" Magazine; and in September 29th issue of "Liberty" Magazine, there was a condensation of the book--with special mention on the front cover of the magazine.

By strange irony, this issue of "Liberty" which contained the condensation of the racially inflammatory book "Black Boy"---displayed on the front cover of the magazine the picture of a returning United States soldier greeting, salute, the Statue of Liberty in New York harbor.

Granting that the negro called Richard Wright actually wrote the book, it is my opinion that all the publicity given to the book is being financed--by some person or organization--for propaganda purposes: to fan the flame of dissension and seditious discontent. How Hitler (if he is yet alive) must laugh, and laugh...

100-157464-24

I would like to believe that my surmise is incorrect; but the evidence, concerning all the publicity given to this book, undeniably refutes any such wishful thinking. I might also add that the book has been advertised in local newspapers and--I presume--in newspapers of other cities all over the United States. I am remembering that the plan of evil dictators and their indoctrinated brood is--still--to "divide and then conquer."

Am offering this suspicion, in case you should deem it advisable to investigate the book and the financing of its extensive publicity--(and the end does not appear in sight).

All loyal Americans, I feel sure, are grateful for all the splendid work done by the F.B.I. in detecting and eradicating crime. With best wishes for the continuation of your most valuable activities, I am

RECORDED
& INDEXED

Sincerely,

File-5-12
67

WRIGHT, R. 100
10-4-45
10-4-45

100-157464-24

Assistant Attorney General T. L. Gaudle
Criminal Division

October 4, 1945

John Edgar Hoover, Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD WRIGHT

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated September 27, 1945, received from [redacted] Dallas, Texas.

This letter is being referred to you as a matter of possible interest.

Enclosure

cc-Assistant Attorney General Herbert Wechsler
War Division

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-8 BY SP185/Kat J

WRIGHT
R. 161

50 OCT 30 1945

100-15716H-24

October 4, 1945

71487

RECORDED

EX-58

[REDACTED]

Dallas, Texas

[REDACTED]

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP1 BJS/ha

b7c

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated
September 27, 1945.

The content of your letter has been carefully noted, and I
want you to know that your interest and courtesy in writing to this
Bureau are very much appreciated. Also I want to thank you for the
complimentary remarks concerning the work of this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you
believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to
communicate with me or the Special Agent in Charge of our Dallas
Field Division located at 1318 Mercantile Bank Building, Dallas, Texas.

Very truly yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

DL
OK 11/20/45 104

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Coffey _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Mr. Carson _____
Mr. Egan _____
Mr. Gurnea _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Pennington _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Mr. Nease _____
Miss Gandy _____

MAILED
OCT 4 - 1945 P.M.
FBI - DALLAS

WRIGHT
P. 1142

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK	DATE WHEN MADE 6/18/46	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 6/5, 12, 14/46	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED] b7c
TITLE RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE SECURITY MATTER - C

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject, negro, resides 82 Washington Place, NYC. Free lance writer, presently working on novel. AGENCY REC'D 11/12/46
Left U.S. for France, May 1946, with return set for Sept. 1946. Reason for trip unknown. BORT REP'T FORW. 8-2-46
9/4/08, Natchez, Miss. Broke with CP due to failure to recognize and deal with problems in society. BY [REDACTED] b7c

Birth date noted on SE card 7-1-46

AGENCY REC'D 7-6-46
REQ. REC'D 7-6-46
REP'T FORW. 7-6-46
BY [REDACTED]

- P* -

REFERENCE:

Bureau File 100-157464
Letters to Bureau, 2/26/45 and 4/17/45
Bureau letter to SACs, #28, 1946 Series, 3/12/46
Bureau letter, 5/7/45

DETAILS:

The records of Selective Service Board #178, 44 Court Street, Brooklyn, New York, reflected that as of March 21, 1946, the subject's address was apartment 3F, 82 Washington Place, New York City, where he resided with his wife. This file also contained a letter dated April 14, 1946, wherein WRIGHT advised he planned to leave the United States on May 1, 1946, for a period of three months in France. The reason for this trip was not given in his letter. b7c

A pretext telephone call was made [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] it was ascertained that the last book the subject wrote was "Black Boy". At the present time he is writing a novel, but the completion date was unknown. It was learned that the subject had left the United States for France around May 1, 1946, and it was believed he would return to this country in September of this year. The reason for the subject's trip was not

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 Bureau 3 New York <i>cc PR 11-18-46</i> <i>COPY IN FILE</i>		100-157464-26	RECORDED
		30 JUN 30 1946 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 8-25-81 BY 8885 J/L	

6-10-46

7-2834

WR164 R. 143

10

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: June 18, 1946

FROM : *py.* SAC, New YorkSUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
SECURITY MATTER - C

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] New York, June 18, 1946, wherein it was set forth that the subject is presently in France where he intends to remain until September, 1946.

In view of this fact, instant case is being reopened and placed in a pending inactive status in order that the subject's residence and activities may be checked upon his return to the United States.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

RECORDED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJS/162

VHG

100-41674

JUN 28 1946

100-151464-25
JUN 20 1946

NY 100-41674

UNDEVELOPED LEAD

NEW YORK

At New York City, N. Y.

Will verify subject's residence and ascertain his activities upon his return to the United States from France, presumably in September, 1946. If possible, secure the subject's reason for his trip to France.

NY 100-41674

mentioned [REDACTED] b7C

As previously reported, the records of Selective Service Board #178, reflected that the subject is negro, and was born September 4, 1908, at Natchez, Mississippi.

A review of the file of the subject reflected that he is a negro writer, who previously wrote for "New Masses" and "Daily Worker". In addition, he had published five novels concerning the fight of the colored people, besides writing skits and stories in a similar vein. He wrote two articles for "Atlantic Monthly" for August and September, 1944, entitled "I Tried To Be A Communist". The theme of these articles appeared to be that he broke with the Party because they were unable to recognize him as a friend. The articles did not seem to attack the Communist Party as revolutionary, but attacked it because of the failure of individuals in the Party to properly recognize and deal with problems in society.

The indices of the New York Field Division reflected no further information concerning the subject.

- PENDING -

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

FROM : *ES*
98 SAC, New York

DATE: February 19, 1947

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C
Bureau file 100-157464

Reference is made to Bureau letter dated September 5, 1946 and to the report of Special Agent [redacted] dated June 18, 1946 at New York in the above entitled case.

100-157464

RICHARD WRIGHT left the United States for France in May 1946 and at the present time, it is not known when he intends to return to this country. In the February 1, 1947 edition of "THE NEW LEADER", an anti-Communist publication of the Social Democrats, appears an article entitled, "AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD WRIGHT". This is a translation of an article under the same title that appeared recently in "DIE WELTWACKE", a weekly journal published in Zurich, Switzerland. WRIGHT was interviewed at Zurich concerning Negro problems and expressed his resentment of racial discrimination in the United States.

Inasmuch as no information has been developed indicating Communist activity on the part of WRIGHT since he severed connections with the Communist Party and further in view of the fact that he may not return to the United States for some time, this case is being closed unless the Bureau otherwise directs.

In view of the subject's past activities, it is believed that the security index card in this case should not be cancelled.

107C

ED
100-41674

Embry, [unclear] [unclear]
Confer

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

100-157464-28

31 FEB 21 1947

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE *8-25-81* BY *[signature]*

9441
1947

WRIGHT, R. 147

SAC, New York
Director, FBI
RICHARD W. WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

September 5, 1946

Your office is instructed to follow the activities of the instant subject in the Communist field closely upon his return from France. Continuing investigation, every effort should be made to obtain admissible evidence tending to prove the subject's membership in, or affiliation with, the Communist Party. In the event you are unable to develop such evidence, further consideration should be given the advisability of cancelling the Security Index Card on this individual.

100-157464
rb

b7c

MAILED 9
SEP 5 1946 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP100/ka

- Tolson
- E. A. Tamm
- Clegg
- Glavin
- Ladd
- Nichols
- Rosen
- Tracy
- Harbo
- Quinn Tamm
- Nease
- Landis

SEP 1 1946 367

RECORDED

100-157464-299 R
FBI

WRIGHT, R. 148

109

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Director, FBI

FROM : SAC, New York

DATE: January 19, 1948

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
SECURITY MATTER - C
(Bureau file 100-157464)Cancel
b2
b7D

A review of instant file reflects that since subject's severance of his connections with the Communist Party, and his public criticism of its policies during 1944, he has not engaged in any Communist activities; that, in fact, according to information submitted by [redacted] subject was definitely not of a Marxist frame of mind as indicated by certain critical comments he made concerning conditions within the Party.

In view of the foregoing circumstances Bureau authority is requested at this time for the cancellation of the security index card maintained on subject by the New York Office.

Cancelled
1-31-48
hml

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

mbm
100-41674

RECORDED 1-22-1948
INDEXED 22 JAN 21 1948
F B I

EX-119

WRIGHT, R. 149

SAC,

Director, FBI
New York

February 3, 1948

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT;
SECURITY MATTER - C
Your File 100-41674

In accordance with your recommendation, the Security Index Card relative to the captioned individual has been cancelled and you are authorized to place your copy thereof in the investigative case file.

RECORDED

100-157464 - 29

cvw
fwd

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJA/bce

67C

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Egan
Mr. Gurnea
Mr. Harbo
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn Tamm
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 11

★ FEB 3 1948 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

54
71 FEB 5 - 1948

WRIGHT, R. 150

112

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

v/o General Delivery,
Los Angeles, California

UNCLAIMED

RETURN
TO WRITER
UNCLAIMED



PRIVACY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE \$3.00

WRIGHT, R. 151

RECORDED

EX-40

EOD
100-157464-22

Mr. James M. McInerney
Acting Head, Criminal Division
John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

July 20, 1945

RICHARD WRIGHT

Attached for your information is a copy of a letter dated July 4, 1945, together with photostatic copies of enclosures, received from [redacted] care of General Delivery, Los Angeles, California. This letter has been acknowledged.

Enclosures

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJS/bk

RECEIVED
DEPT. OF JUSTICE
JUL 20 4 45 PM '45
READING ROOM

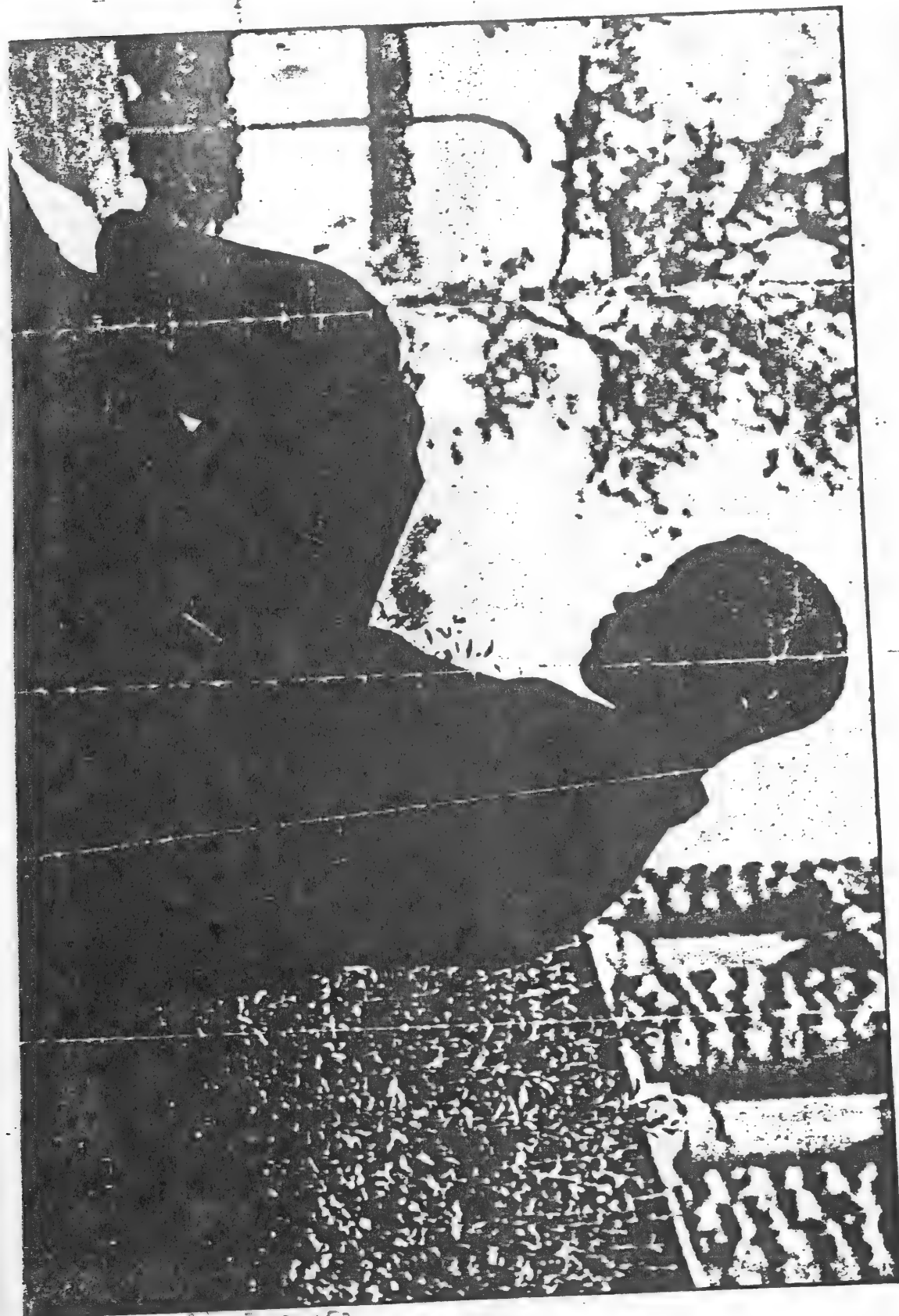
RECEIVED
FBI
RECORDED - HYAT 80
JUL 21 1 23 PM '45

Subj. of [unclear]

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Gurnea
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

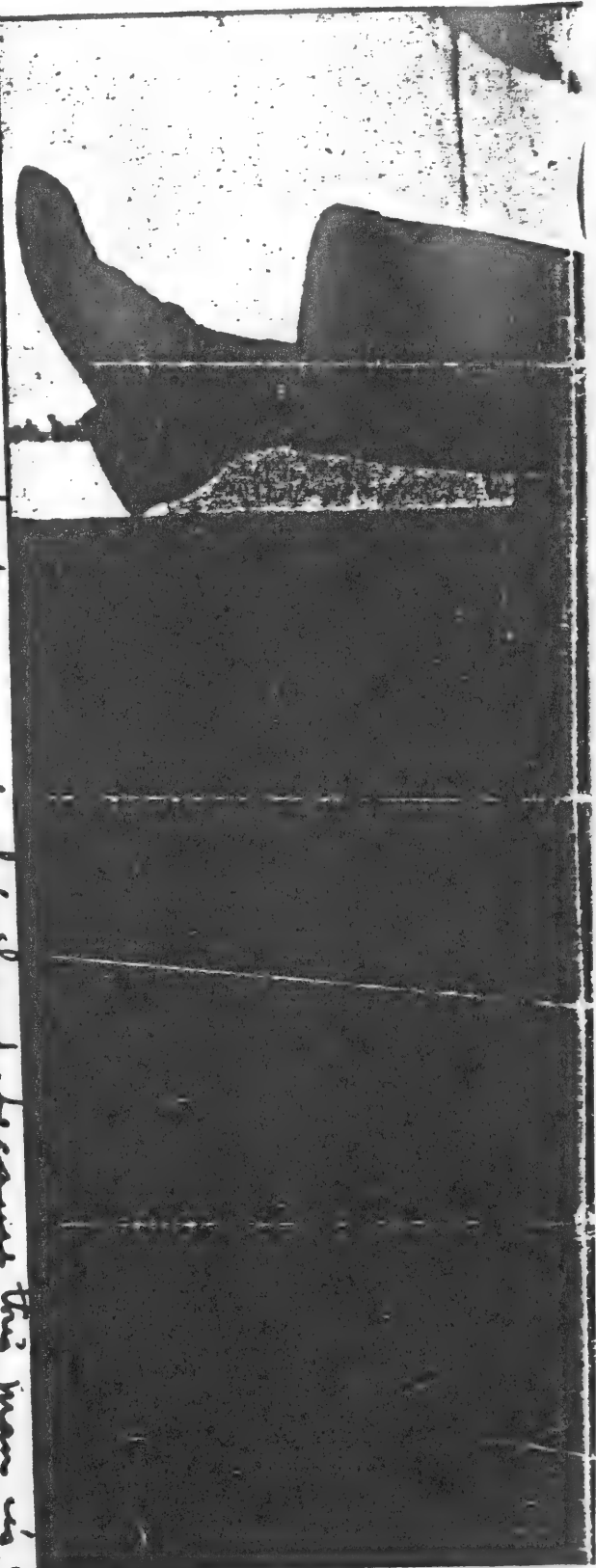
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 15
★ JUL 21 1945 P.M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WRIGHT
R.152



WRIGHT, R. 153

100-157464-22



Please have a not doctor examine his head because this man is crazy

Black Boy

Wright

A Negro writes a bitter autobiography

this story is a lie this man is a white man.

Photographs for LIFE by GEORGE KARGER

Black Boy is the autobiography of the youth of a 37-year-old Negro named Richard Wright who, in 1940, wrote *Native Son*. That novel, which placed Wright among America's most gifted writers, was a bitter, fictional account of a Negro's revolt against the life imposed on a Negro in the North. *Black Boy* (Harper, \$2.50) is a bitter, true story of a Negro boy's struggles against the life imposed on his race in the South. Richard Wright was born on a Mississippi plantation and reared by a fanatically religious grandmother. *Spunk* of the *Blues* people don't want to start popping you had better stop the niggers driving long. the South have its faults it need to be changed but the black can not change it.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

condemns a white man for spreading race hatred
100-157464-22

NEGROES JOIN PICKET

Hawkins, Rev. Russell Called 'UnAmerican'; Huey Long Praised

Colored men and women formed part of a tense picket line outside of Philharmonic auditorium Monday night, demonstrating against the use of the hall by Gerald L. K. Smith, leader of the America First movement.

Despite the picket line, however, and despite numerous protests to the management from prominent individuals and organizations, Smith was permitted to speak and to make unsubstantial, fascist charges before an audience of 3,000.

ROOSEVELT DENOUNCED

The America Firsters declared that Rev. Clayton D. Russell, pastor of the Peoples Independent Church of Christ, is guilty of un-American activities. The same charge was leveled against August F. Hawkins, Los Angeles Assemblyman, co-author of the California Fair Employment Practices Committee, and against Herbert Sorrell, actor.

The late President Roosevelt, Secretary of Commerce Henry Wallace, Charles Chaplin and Langston Hughes were among those also denounced by Smith.

Roosevelt was accused of wanting to be president of the world. Wallace was asked why he didn't run for vice-president under Joe Stalin, and Charles Chaplin was cited as the heaviest contributor to the Communist party in 1922.

DEPORT CHAPLIN

Smith recommended that Chaplin be deported, and this suggestion was greeted with loud applause by the audience.

Langston Hughes, well-known poet, was declared to be the type of person who should not be allowed to appear on a college campus.

Smith, in speaking of his past, openly boasted of his association
(Continued on Page Two)

NAACP Seeks Free P

Urgent requests were especially appointed to the Citizens' Emergency meeting Monday night, fraternal and civic send telegrams to Secretary Stimson; Truman Gilboide to the secretary members of the California and senate demanding immediate release of Lieut. Shirley Clinton and Thompson, now under arrest at Goodman Field Ky.

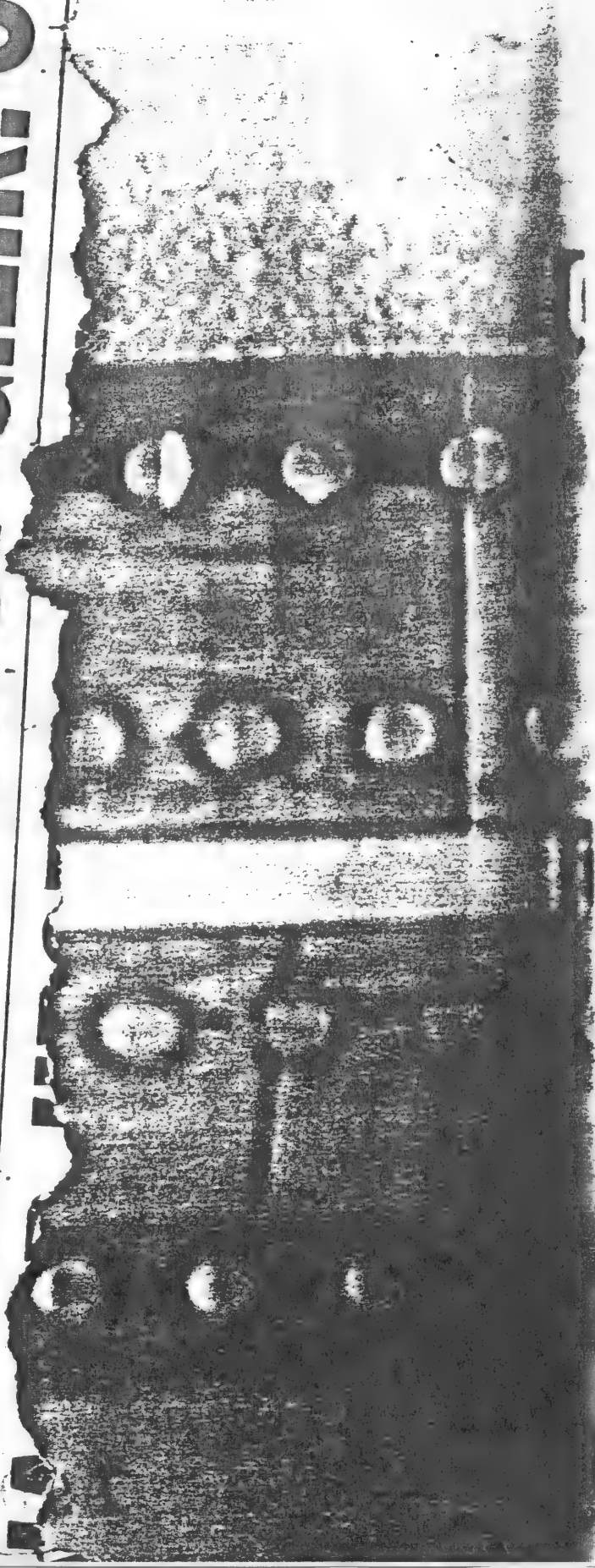
The officers were their refusal to part with crew move to officers from the police club, Thompson and are Los Angeles boys known throughout U

Atty. Thomas L. Gilboide to the secretary members of the California and senate demanding immediate release of Lieut. Shirley Clinton and Thompson, now under arrest at Goodman Field Ky.

W 1 6471 B 155

preaching race hatred and allow a negro to do it. this white man is wrong and so is Richard Wright

ON PICKETING OF G.L.K. SMI



...thing is
William Hampton,
Countryside, Ill.

"Black Boy" Not Picture Of Negro

It seems that I've lived in America a million years; it's only a life time. It seems that I've dwelled in the slums as long; that, too, is but a life time. It seems that I've known intimately a zillion black boys and girls; there have only been those that I have met in the actual extent of my age, over thirty years. — In all my experience as a black American, I've never known a black child like the portrait Richard Wright paints in his recent book, "Black Boy." "Black Boy," like "Native Son," is a problem novel. Its purpose is to uncover the deplorable conditions under which our children exist, thereby stimulating corrective measures. The objective is fine. I hope it works, but "Black Boy" does not represent the average life of the Negro child in America.

On nearly every corner on our neighborhood there was a tavern. As a child I remember "drunks" staggering, heard their vile language, never saw a single child in the place or at the open door. It had developed

t
u
cot
here
limin
and
lease
cil is

Wl
pare
woul
this
the s
on Th
RA-S

Cra
M
pa
ir

black and white people in the South.

Sincerely

b7c

general delivery

RECEIVED
JUL 27 11 35 AM '48
U.S. DEPT. OF JUSTICE
F.B.I.
SECURITY DIVISION

WRIGHT, R. 158

86

Los Angeles Cal
July - 4 - 45

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

Dear Sir

do you see this trash here this
nigger is one of the biggest spreaders of race
hatred there is in the world he is nothing
but a black nazi and for that reason we
people think it is best to ban his books
as they are doing no good and a lot of harm
other people have wrote to you folks to
have this mans books baned. They are to
filthy and they are giving the whole world
a wrong empresion about the way the negre
live in America. we do not know how
to have undesirable books baned so
we are writing to you folks so please
do some thing to put a ~~hand~~ ^{RECORDED} on this lying
black beast trash. He is ~~doing nothing~~ ^{INDEXED} ~~but trying to stir up race trouble~~ ¹⁵⁷⁴¹⁴⁻²²
only thirty seven ~~we~~ ^{JUL 10 1945} do wish you folks
would put him in the Army. ~~Get a copy of his books and you will~~
see just how that lying dog is ~~going~~ ⁶⁷⁰
trying to anetate trouble between the

88347

RICHARD WRIGHT

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-22-81 BY SP8 BTJ/6ce

EX-22 100-15744-1
FBI
30 JUL 6 1945

WRIGHT, R.

160

EX-22
anonymous and
non-specific notation
necessary

9

LVO
100-157464-20

RECORDED

July 11, 1945

b7C

Los Angeles, California

I have received your letter of July 1, 1945, and appreciate your interest in making the observations contained therein available to me. In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the Federal Bureau of Investigation please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division whose address is 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California, telephone Madison 7241.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/KC

LVO

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 15
JUL 11 1945
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Est
HH

b7C

8

WRIGHT
R. 1161

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

July 11, 1945

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, California

I have received your letter of July 1, 1945, and appreciate your interest in making the observations contained therein available to me. In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the Federal Bureau of Investigation please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division whose address is 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California, telephone Madison 7241.

Sincerely yours,

J. E. Hoover
John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bc
D. Fair

WRIGHT, R. 162

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

LOS ANGELES
APR 14 1945
CALIF.

LYON, A. J., Los Angeles, California.

৫৭০

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP4 BT

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20
JUL 11
11-PM
1945

~~PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE (\$300)~~

RECORDED

LVO
100-157464 - 20 ✓

July 11, 1945

Mr. James M. McInerney
Acting Head, Criminal Division
John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

PUBLICATIONS OF RICHARD WRIGHT

Enclosed herewith for such consideration as you may deem appropriate
is a copy of a communication received by this Bureau from [redacted]
[redacted] Los Angeles, California. The letter of [redacted]
has been acknowledged by this Bureau.

b7c

cc - Assistant Attorney General
Herbert Wechsler

Enclosure

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 1-25-81 BY SP8 BJA/bce

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Carson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn Tamm
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 15

★ JUL 11 1945 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

WRIGHT,
R. 164

b7c

Los Angeles Cal
July 1-45

FBI = or lit. cont. authority →

w/ing.
prow to
bnc
book

Dear Sir

We are writing you people in hope you will be able to have books like black boy and also Native Son by the Negro Richard Wright baned as he is spreading race hatred and causing disunity. If you will look through the mans books you will see how he rant and rave like a mad man. It is terrible and also he use to much filthy expressions the white writers don't do that so why should he. So for the sake of unity please have his books baned. They are doing no good and a lot of harm.

If the Negro author cant write a book without trying to stir up race hatred between the white and colored folks it will be better for them to not write at all.

[REDACTED]

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BT/bie

and a lot of harm.

If the negro Anthon
cant write a book with trying to stir
up race hatred between the white
and colord folks it will be better
for them to not write at all.



CITIZEN
LIT
CANT

RECEIVED
JUL 16 11 20 AM '45
RECEIVED
JUL 7 9 26 AM '45
F B I U S DEPT OF JUSTICE
U S DEPT OF JUSTICE
RECEIVED SECURITY DIV
JUL 6 - 7 06 PM '45



What The People Say

toxicants at the early age of six. There isn't any question about the undemocratic practices in America. It doesn't matter if one is a resident of the North or South, as Black Boy was, the glaring discrepancies between the ideals and the realities are sufficient to floor the idealist and shock the realist. But it is hard to imagine a life like Black Boy's. It seems that someone would have come into the picture to redeem our faith in human-kind. Perhaps "Black Boy" is that character. In the face of all the circumstances a flicker of ambition kept within him. He even possessed the "foreign" desire to write.

Richard Wright has little pride in his own people for he says: "Whenever I thought of the essential bleakness of black life in America, I knew that Negroes had never been allowed to catch the full spirit of Western civilization, that they lived somehow in it but not of it. And when I brooded upon the cultural barrenness of black life, I wondered if clean, positive tenderness, love, honor, loyalty, and the capacity to remember were native with man. I asked myself if these human qualities were not fostered, won, struggled and suffered for, preserved in ritual from one generation to another."

As I reflect about the human qualities of Western civilization, I wonder about the "positive tenderness" of the whites. Could there be much genuine feeling within the hearts of a people who could stand by and permit conditions such as exist in "Black Boy" to prevail? What kind of people are these who kept others in slavery, freed them in name only, tried to make sure that they didn't become enlightened through education, signed restrictive covenants to keep them living in the slums, maintained the idea of white supremacy? The only "genuine passion" that I ever saw exhibited was the unleashed spirit that moved the mobs to lynch.

How hollow are the memories of white America that send Gold Star mothers over to Europe to visit the graves of their fallen black sons in Jim-Crow transports! How hollow are the memories of white America that maintain a Jim-Crow army and navy in the second World War. Where is this grand compassion of Western civilization? This "emotional strength," this "clean, positive

tenderness, love, honor, loyalty," leaves me groping in the darkness.

Negroes do feel deeply! Could they have given America folk music otherwise? It is agreed that our masses need education. Through education they will arrive. But I believe that the way of life of the Negro, the humble folk, with the white humble folk, is the only redeeming factor in America. It's the humble soul that makes life livable anywhere. It is he who offers a helping hand in the time of trouble; it is he who practices the golden rule; it is he who doesn't clamor for wealth and position, (the shallow possessions.) . . . In happy contrast to the materialists, the capitalists, the exploiters, he makes a pretty picture. It is he, the meek soul, black and white, who will one day inherit the earth.—Ruth Apilado, Maywood, Ill.

Sorry For Race Haters

My home has or the larger div my dis me

me st Af po wa of fro ent

"I poss was her proce

He befor she gan Roy frien Roy him.

Suc seem hate had tre of r miri beg droj

uttering heel.

Leavin later, I ment in toward two be cific, o own you in the these fo persecut whose o tor saw of the b In son ashamed bit sorry nois.

Lauds I For For

I am a page of sue of M "Is the tory?" It is

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8BT/gha

WRIGHT, R.
167

D A C F

100 - 157464 - 19

eye sight. we colored people want Richard Wright's
books banned if he cant write a story with out
trying to agitate race trouble we want him
to pick him self a new vocation. Just get
a copy of his books and go through them
we dont see why he isnt in the Army any
way. If he went to India or some other place
and saw how horrible those people live then
he would see how far advanced we are.
After all we colored people are doing the best
we can if you would get a copy of the negro
hand book for 1942 you would see just how
well we are doing. we are only a small race of
people. we colored people are very discouraged
and that is the reason sixty million little bitty
Japanese in Japan can fight all most two Billion
people with out a allie and hold out so long.
Because that Billion colored people are on the
point of giving up. After all this is not our war
and if we win we ^{lose} ^{it} ^{all} I suppose there is
nothing to do but just say to hell with the hole
bloody mess.

this is from that poor old fool book Black boy
this is enough to provoke the devil

Los Angeles Calif

June 18 - 45

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED

HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8Bry/bce

Dear Sir

LICARD WRIGHT

Richard Wright the negro who wrote
Black boy and native son books are doing no good
and a lot of harm they are causing disunity
and spreading race hatred and if you people dont
want America tore up the same as Germany
you had better put a stop to such people as that
poor old ass of a Southern Senator with his
back to Africa move ment and such old fools as
that poor crazy old Richard Wright. We colored people
are good natured all we want is justice a good
job with good pay for work well done. Every time
we turn around some one is complaining nagging
constantly criticizing every thing we do
Richard Wright seem to be run happy in America
so we wish to god he would leave and go some
place else for he is getting on our nerves.
I and all the other colored people know that
ninety percent of the trash that he put in
his books are lies, but if people in the
should get a hold of Black boy I'm awfull
afraid Uncle Sam's face is going to be red
for you cant rule a German if you cant
rule America. And the lies that poor sick
Richard Wright put in his books sure

16/11/11-22

ack 25-81

676

WRIGHT, R.
169

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
WASHINGTON, D. C.
OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Re: 4-20
4-21

WOLEWOOD,
CALIF.



Wolewood, R. 170



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP1BT/...



PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID

Wolewood, R. 170

JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

July 6, 1945

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, California
[REDACTED]

*No such address
vsl b7c*

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 18, 1945, with enclosure.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully reviewed and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

Sincerely yours,

J. E. Hoover

John Edgar Hoover
Director



DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BJA
165
57 JUL 28 1945

File-5-172

*WRIGHT
871*

RECORDED 100-157464-19

EX-8

July 6, 1945

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, California
[REDACTED]

b7c

This will acknowledge receipt of your letter dated June 18, 1945, with enclosure.

The material which you have submitted has been carefully reviewed and I want to thank you for your interest and courtesy in writing to this Bureau.

In the event you receive additional information which you believe to be of interest to the FBI, I want you to feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Carson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn Tamm
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED

JUL 13 1945

72

WR16471R, 173

JUN 30 1945
JOHN EDGAR HOOVER
DIRECTOR



Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
Washington, D. C.

June 30, 1945

[Redacted]
Los Angeles, California

b7C

I desire to acknowledge your letter of June 22, 1945, with enclosure.

You may be assured that the content of your communication has been very carefully noted and I want to thank you for your interest in communicating with me.

If in the future you should obtain information which you feel is of value to this Bureau, please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

J. E. Hoover
John Edgar Hoover
Director



100-157464-17
JUN 30 1945

VB

b7c

100-157464-17

June 30, 1945

EX-61

[REDACTED]
Los Angeles, California

b7c

I desire to acknowledge your letter of June 22, 1945, with enclosure.

You may be assured that the content of your communication has been very carefully noted and I want to thank you for your interest in communicating with me.

If in the future you should obtain information which you feel is of value to this Bureau, please feel free to communicate directly with the Special Agent in Charge of our Los Angeles Field Division which is located at 900 Security Building, Los Angeles 13, California.

Sincerely yours,

John Edgar Hoover
Director

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTG/bce

Handwritten signature

MAILED

JUN 30 1945
56 PM '45

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

- Mr. Tolson
- Mr. E. A. Tamm
- Mr. Clegg
- Mr. Coffey
- Mr. Glavin
- Mr. Ladd
- Mr. Nichols
- Mr. Rosen
- Mr. Tracy
- Mr. Carson
- Mr. Egan
- Mr. Hendon
- Mr. Pennington
- Mr. Quinn Tamm
- Mr. Nease
- Miss Gandy

WRIGHT
R. P.

Handwritten initials

Washington, reporter

If enough such books are written, if enough millions of people read them, maybe, someday, there will be a greater understanding and a more true democracy."
—Orville Prescott, N. Y. Times



BLACK BOY

By RICHARD WRIGHT
Author of *Native Son*

"A deeply disturbing document in race relations."—Howard Mumford Jones, *Saturday Review of Literature*

"Possibly the most sensational confession of an American boyhood ever put on paper."—Harry Hansen, N. Y. World-Telegram

A Book-of-the-Month Club Selection for March
At all bookstores • \$2.50

we do not offer of this life, books and love

they are spreading race hatred and causing division

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bee

WRIGHT, R. 175

100 - 127464 - 17

B leave me mister we are tired and disgusted and discouraged.
 And if you dont want America behind the eighth ball you had better
 put a w stop to some of this run American litterure. Because we want peace
 and not having to be dragged.

Don't do that for god sake but that Adde pated Saps
 looks for they are driving us nuts. And besides
 he put to much filth in his books.
 you know what Adolph Hitler wants
 say I evade and conquer. Well if you
 dont want that to happen in America
 you had better put a stop to these American
 uncle Toms with there type writer from

writing so much belly aching hog wash.

Because take it from me mister there are
 only sixty million people in Japan and
 she is fighting all most 2 Billion people
 one billion of those people are colord.

And if those Billion colord people wasent
 disgusted and discouraged this war
 could have been over long ago.

We colord people dont mind the truth
 but we do hate lies or any thing that
 destint. We fear of mine. The back stabing
 Southern white people are on one side nagging
 send the colord people back to Africa and
 a bunch of damn fools like Richard Wright
 are on the other side lying, complaining critteray
 we billion colord people say - The

VB
100-157464 -16

b7c

RECORDED

SAC, New York

May 7, 1945

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C

Reference is made to your letter of April 17, 1945, in the above captioned matter.

In view of the militant attitude of the subject toward the Negro problem, as set forth in your letter of February 26, 1945, it is believed that you should submit a recommendation for the preparation of a Security Index Card in this case.

You may consider this letter as the Bureau's approval of such a recommendation and you should place a Security Index Card in your files at this time.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-91 BY SP8 BTG/lka

b7c

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

MAILED 8

MAY - 7 1945 P.M.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Carson
Mr. Egan
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Pennington
Mr. Quinn
Mr. Nease
Miss Gandy

WRIGHT, R.
177

MAY 12 1945

Los Angeles Cal

June 22-45

Dear Sir. RICHARD WRIGHT

Richard Wright the negro who wrote 12 million black voices and Black boy books should be baned as they are spreading race hatred and causing disunity.

We seem to feel as because of American prejudice that the American negro is living under horrible conditions. Well I am an American negro and proud of it because we colored people in America have come a long ways in the last seventy years. Only in America have the negro been as successful.

If you get a copy of the negro hand book of 1942 and turn over to page any of its pages you will see just how successful that we colored people are. Richard Wright doesn't approve of our way of life we wish you would put him in the funny on the first line in the Pacific theater of war and if a Jap kill him as a medal. And if you

DATE 8-25-81 BY 500879/kan

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

RECORDED & INDEXED

JUN 26 1945

ack 6-30-45

676

WRIGHT, R. 178

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

HGF
100-41674

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: April 17, 1945

FROM : SAC, New York

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C
(Bureau File 100-157464)

Reference is made to New York letter to the Bureau dated February 26, 1945 in the captioned matter wherein it was pointed out that in view of the subject's public break with the Communist Party, he is no longer being carried as a key figure by the New York Field Office, but that a Security Index card on him was being maintained by this office. This statement was made in error in view of the fact that although the New York Office recommended to the Bureau by letter dated June 28, 1944 that a Security Index Card be prepared on the subject, no authorization was actually received by the Bureau to prepare such a card.

Therefore, no Security Index card is being maintained in the New York Office on the subject unless contrary advice is received from the Bureau.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 98612/6e

WRIGHT, R.
179

RECORDED 100-157464-16

EX-26

Index + file

PRESCOTT

RICHARD WRIGHT is the author of one of the most widely read and hotly debated novels of recent years, "Native Son," an acknowledged leader of his race. But the way was long and the road was rocky. Not very many years ago he was just "a black boy in Mississippi," which means few men in the world have begun life under a burden of



Richard Wright

not over. It has not changed. Hundreds of thousands of other little black boys are enduring it today. Such a life is usually completely outside the comprehension of white Americans, either Southern or Northern. But those who care to can now share it, in Mr. Wright's "Black Boy: A Record of Childhood and Youth."

This is a story from America's own lower depths. No nostalgic memories of childhood are these, no sentimental yearnings for innocent years when the hills were so much higher. Mr. Wright's childhood was an obscene and monstrous nightmare, a malign inferno that might well have destroyed him utterly. He survived, but not unscathed. "Black Boy" is not the work of an objective artist or of an open mind. It could not have been. The neuroses, the over-emphasis, the lack of balance and the emotion recollected in turmoil are the bitter fruit of an old injustice.

Shows Harsh Dramatic Power

Mr. Wright in this explosive autobiography does not suggest any constructive means for improving the lot of the Negro in this country. Like Lillian Smith, he can only display suffering and cruelty with harsh dramatic power, he can only arouse anger and sympathy. If enough such books are written, if enough millions of people read them, maybe, some day, in the fullness of time, there will be a greater understanding and a more true democracy.

Richard Wright grew up in the slums of Mem-

*BLACK BOY: A Record of Childhood and Youth. By Richard Wright. 226 pages. Harper. \$2.50.

phis and in the rural slums of Mississippi near Jackson. His father deserted his mother, so the poverty he knew was double the usual lot. The two dominant influences of his childhood were hunger and fear, a gnawing hunger that kept him weak and half-starved and a fear that grew and multiplied and filled his entire life. He feared his mother's anger, the whippings of his uncles and aunts, the abuse of other children, ghosts, white men with their inexplicable and capricious cruelties, fear itself. Terror was his companion night and day, violence the norm of all experience. Foul language and foul habits, ignorance and superstition, primitive religious fanaticism surrounded him on all sides. The proud, sensitive, intelligent child looked up from below at a grotesque, outrageous world.

Some of the evils he knew were caused by poverty and ignorance alone and would not have been much different in Ireland or Iran. But even these evils were intensified by the shibboleth of color and many others were caused by race alone. Mr. Wright's uncle was murdered by a white man and no one dared even to protest. A boyhood acquaintance was lynched. He learned to be servile and obsequious, to say "sir" to drunken and contemptible white men, to conceal his thoughts and emotions beneath a mask of humble good humor and deference. Not to do so, to forget the "sir" or the "mister," to aspire to learn a skilled trade, to show resentment of sneers, condescension and abuse, was to invite "trouble." And trouble could mean death.

Author Distorts Bleak Story

"Black Boy" only takes Mr. Wright into his late teens when he escaped to Chicago. His experiences there and in radical politics will doubtless be material for another book. It could conceivably be an intellectually more interesting book, one more concerned with thought and ideas. But it could hardly be a more emotionally dreadful one. Part of the raw shock of "Black Boy" is caused by Mr. Wright's excessive determination to omit nothing, to emphasize mere filth. This springs from a lack of artistic discrimination and selectivity. He has not added to the bleak tragedy of his story; he has only distorted it and confused it with such material.

It is also obvious in reading "Black Boy," and Mr. Wright admits it, that his is not a typical story. He felt isolated from Negroes as well as from whites; other Negroes resented their lot but did not feel at all so acutely as he did. Perhaps with the hindsight of the years in which he has brooded and with a natural literary instinct to capitalize and dramatize his emotions Mr. Wright has exaggerated his sufferings. It would be only human if he had.

"Black Boy" has little subtlety, little light and shade, no restraint. It is written in a continuously strained and feverish manner. It is over-written. But it is powerful, moving and horrifying. It is certain to be extravagantly praised and roundly condemned. It will be widely read.

This is a clipping from page 21 of the New York Times for

NOT RECORDED
86 MAR 20 1945

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bce

Feb. 28, 1945
Clipped at the Seat of Government.

WRIGHT, R. 180

called up hard facts. He painted a horrible but masterful picture of Fascism's aggression in Germany, Italy, and Japan.

I accepted the reason why the trial began in this manner. It was imperative that here be postulated against what or whom Ross's crimes had been committed. Therefore there had to be established in the minds of all present a vivid picture of mankind under oppression. And it was a true picture. Perhaps no organization on earth, save the Communist Party, possessed so detailed a knowledge of how workers lived, for its sources of information stemmed directly from the workers themselves.

The next speaker discussed the role of the Soviet Union as the world's lone workers' state—how the Soviet Union was hemmed in by enemies, how the Soviet Union was trying to industrialize itself, what sacrifices it was making to help workers of the world to steer a path toward peace through the idea of collective security.

The facts presented so far were as true as any facts could be in this uncertain world. Yet no one word had been said of the accused, who sat listening like any other member. The time had not yet come to include him and his crimes in this picture of global struggle. An absolute had first to be established in the minds of the comrades so that they could measure the success or failure of their deeds by it.

Finally a speaker came forward and spoke of Chicago's South Side, its Negro population, their suffering and handicaps, taking all that also to the world struggle. Then still another speaker followed and described the tasks of the Communist Party of the South Side. At last, the world, the national, and the local pictures had been fused into one overwhelming drama of moral struggle in which everybody in the hall was participating. This presentation had lasted for more than three hours, but it had enthroned a new sense of reality in the hearts of those present, a sense of man on earth. With the exception of the church and its myths and legends, there was no agency in the world so capable of making men feel the earth and the people upon it as the Communist Party.

Toward evening the direct charges against Ross were made, not by the leaders of the party, but by Ross's friends, those who knew him best! It was crushing. Ross wilted. His emotions could not withstand the weight of the moral pressure. No one was terrorized into giving information against him. They gave it willingly, citing dates, conversations, scenes. The black mass of Ross's wrongdoing emerged slowly and irrefutably.

The moment came for Ross to defend himself. I had been told that he had arranged for friends to

specify in his behalf, but he called upon no one. He stood, trembling; he tried to talk and his words would not come. The hall was as still as death. Guilt was written in every pore of his black skin. His hands shook. He held on to the edge of the table to keep on his feet. His personality, his sense of himself, had been obliterated. Yet he could not have been so humbled unless he had shared and accepted the vision that had crushed him, the common vision that bound us all together.

"Comrades," he said in a low, charged voice, "I'm guilty of all the charges, all of them."

His voice broke in a sob. No one prodded him. No one tortured him. No one threatened him. He was free to go out of the hall and never see another Communist. But he did not want to. He could not. The vision of a communal world had sunk down into his soul and it would never leave him until life left him. He talked on, outlining how he had erred, how he would reform.

I know, as I sat there, that there were many people who thought they knew life who had been skeptical of the Moscow trials. But they could not have been skeptical had they witnessed this astonishing trial. Ross had not been doped; he had been awakened. It was not a fear of the Communist Party that had made him confess, but a fear of the punishment that he would exact of himself that made him tell of his wrongdoings. The Communists had talked to him until they had given him new eyes with which to see his own crime. And then they sat back and listened to him tell how he had erred. He was one with all the members there, regardless of race or color; his heart was theirs and their hearts were his; and when a man reaches that state of kinship with others, that degree of oneness, or when a trial has made him kin after he has been sundered from them by wrongdoing, then he must rise and say, out of a sense of the deepest morality in the world: "I'm guilty. Forgive me."

This, to me, was a spectacle of glory; and yet, because it had condemned me, because it was blind and ignorant, I felt that it was a spectacle of horror. The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I knew that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason and my execution would have followed. And I knew that they felt, with all the strength of their black blindness, that they were right.

DeSheim thought my advice sound and, accordingly, he assembled the company and told them that they had a right to petition against him if they wanted to, but that he thought any misunderstandings that existed could be settled smoothly.

"Who told you that we were getting up a petition?" a black man demanded.

DeSheim looked at me and stammered wordlessly. "There's an Uncle Tom in the theater!" a black girl yelled.

After the meeting a delegation of Negro men came to my office and took out their pocketknives and flashed them in my face.

"You get the hell off this job before we cut your bellybutton out!" they said.

I telephoned my white friends in the Works Progress Administration: "Transfer me at once to another job, or I'll be murdered."

Within twenty-four hours DeSheim and I were given our papers. We shook hands and went our separate ways.

I was transferred to a white experimental theatrical company as a publicity agent and I resolved to keep my ideas to myself, or, better, to write them down and not attempt to translate them into reality.

12

One evening a group of Negro Communists called at my home and asked to speak to me in strict secrecy. I took them into my room and locked the door.

"Dick," they began abruptly, "the party wants you to attend a meeting Sunday."

"Why?" I asked. "I'm no longer a member."

"That's all right. They want you to be present," they said.

"Communists don't speak to me on the street," I said. "Now, why do you want me at a meeting?"

They hedged. They did not want to tell me.

"If you can't tell me, then I can't come," I said.

They whispered among themselves and finally decided to take me into their confidence.

"Dick, Ross is going to be tried," they said.

"For what?"

They recited a long list of political offenses of which they alleged that he was guilty.

"But what has that got to do with me?"

"If you come, you'll find out," they said.

"I'm not that naive," I said. I was suspicious now. Were they trying to lure me to a trial and expel me? "This trial might turn out to be mine."

They swore that they had no intention of placing me on trial, that the party merely wanted me to

observe Ross's trial so that I might learn what happened to "enemies of the working class."

As they talked, my old love of witnessing something new came over me. I wanted to see this trial, but I did not want to risk being placed on trial myself.

"Listen," I told them. "I'm not guilty of Neelson's charges. If I showed up at this trial, it would seem that I am."

"No, it won't. Please come."

"All right. But, listen. If I'm tricked, I'll fight. You hear? I don't trust Neelson. I'm not a politician and I cannot anticipate all the funny moves of a man who spends his waking hours plotting."

Ross's trial took place that following Sunday afternoon. Comrades stood inconspicuously on guard about the meeting hall, at the doors, down the street, and along the hallways. When I appeared, I was ushered in quickly. I was tense. It was a rule that once you had entered a meeting of this kind you could not leave until the meeting was over; it was feared that you might go to the police and denounce them all.

Ross, the accused, sat alone at a table in the front of the hall, his face distraught. I felt sorry for him; yet I could not escape feeling that he enjoyed this. For him, this was perhaps the highlight of an otherwise bleak existence.

In trying to grasp why Communists hated intellectuals, my mind was led back again to the accounts I had read of the Russian Revolution. There had existed in Old Russia millions of poor, ignorant people who were exploited by a few educated, arrogant noblemen, and it became natural for the Russian Communists to associate betrayal with intellectualism. But there existed in the Western world an element that baffled and frightened the Communist Party: the prevalence of self-achieved literacy. Even a Negro, entrapped by ignorance and exploitation, — as I had been, — could, if he had the will and the love for it, learn to read and to understand the world in which he lived. And it was these people that the Communists could not understand.

The trial began in a quiet, informal manner. The comrades acted like a group of neighbors sitting in judgment upon one of their kind who had stolen a chicken. Anybody could ask and get the floor. There was absolute freedom of speech. Yet the meeting had an amazingly formal structure of its own, a structure that went as deep as the desire of men to live together.

A member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party rose and gave a description of the world situation. He spoke without emotion and

I was not able to know if my statement reached Nealson. There was no public outcry against me, but in the ranks of the party itself a storm broke loose and I was branded a traitor, an unstable personality, and one whose faith had failed.

My comrades had known me, my family, my friends; they, God knows, had known my aching poverty. But they had never been able to conquer their fear of the individual way in which I acted and lived, an individuality which life had scored into my bones.

11

I WAS transferred by the relief authorities from the South Side Boys' Club to the Federal Negro Theater to work as a publicity agent. There were days when I was acutely hungry for the incessant analyses that went on among the comrades, but whenever I heard news of the party's inner life, it was of charges and countercharges, reprisals and counterreprisals.

The Federal Negro Theater, for which I was doing publicity, had run a series of ordinary plays, all of which had been revamped to "Negro style," with jungle scenes, spirituals, and all. For example, the skinny white woman who directed it, an elderly missionary type, would take a play whose characters were white, whose theme dealt with the Middle Ages, and recast it in terms of Southern Negro life with overtones of African backgrounds. Contemporary plays dealing realistically with Negro life were spurned as being controversial. There were about forty Negro actors and actresses in the theater, jolling about, yearning, disgruntled.

What a waste of talent, I thought. Here was an opportunity for the production of a worth-while Negro drama and no one was aware of it. I studied the situation, then laid the matter before white friends of mine who held influential positions in the Works Progress Administration. I asked them to replace the white woman — including her quaint aesthetic notions — with someone who knew the Negro and the theater. They promised me that they would act.

Within a month the white woman director had been transferred. We moved from the South Side to the Loop and were housed in a first-rate theater. I successfully recommended Charles DeSheim, a talented Jew, as director. DeSheim and I held long talks during which I outlined what I thought could be accomplished. I urged that our first offering should be a bill of three one-act plays, including Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun*, a grim, poetical, powerful one-acter dealing with chain-gang conditions in the South.

I was happy. At last I was in a position to make suggestions and have them acted upon. I was convinced that we had a rare chance to build a genuine Negro theater. I convoked a meeting and introduced DeSheim to the Negro company, telling them that he was a man who knew the theater, who would lead them toward serious dramatics. DeSheim made a speech wherein he said that he was not at the theater to direct it, but to help the Negroes to direct it. He spoke so simply and eloquently that they rose and applauded him.

I then proudly passed out copies of Paul Green's *Hymn to the Rising Sun* to all members of the company. DeSheim assigned reading parts. I sat down to enjoy adult Negro dramatics. But something went wrong. The Negroes stammered and faltered in their lines. Finally they stopped reading altogether. DeSheim looked frightened. One of the Negro actors rose.

"Mr. DeSheim," he began, "we think this play is indecent. We don't want to act in a play like this before the American public. I don't think any such conditions exist in the South. I lived in the South and I never saw any chain gangs. Mr. DeSheim, we want a play that will make the public love us."

"What kind of play do you want?" DeSheim asked them.

They did not know. I went to the office and looked up their records and found that most of them had spent their lives playing cheap vaudeville. I had thought that they played vaudeville because the legitimate theater was barred to them, and now it turned out they wanted none of the legitimate theater, that they were scared spitless at the prospects of appearing in a play that the public might not like, even though they did not understand that public and had no way of determining its likes or dislikes.

I felt — but only temporarily — that perhaps the whites were right, that Negroes were children and would never grow up. DeSheim informed the company that he would produce any play they liked, and they sat like frightened mice, possessing no words to make known their vague desires.

When I arrived at the theater a few mornings later, I was horrified to find that the company had drawn up a petition demanding the ousting of DeSheim. I was asked to sign the petition and I refused.

"Don't you know your friends?" I asked them.

They glared at me. I called DeSheim to the theater and we went into a frantic conference.

"What must I do?" he asked.

"Take them into your confidence," I said. "Let them know that it is their right to petition for a redress of their grievances."

"It's easy. You can learn," he said.

I was in the midst of writing a novel and he was calling me from it to tabulate the price of groceries.

"He doesn't think much of what I'm trying to do," I thought.

"Comrade Nealson," I said, "a writer who hasn't written anything worth while is a most doubtful person. Now, I'm in that category. Yet I think I can write. I don't want to ask for special favors, but I'm in the midst of a book which I hope to complete in six months or so. Let me convince myself that I'm wrong about my hankering to write and then I'll be with you all the way."

"Dick," he said, turning in his chair and waving his hand as though to brush away an insect that was annoying him, "you've got to get to the masses of people."

"You've seen some of my work," I said. "Isn't it just barely good enough to warrant my being given a chance?"

"The party can't deal with your feelings," he said.

"Maybe I don't belong in the party," I stated it in full.

"Oh, no! Don't say that," he said, snorting. He looked at me. "You're blunt."

"I put things the way I feel them," I said. "I want to start in right with you. I've had too damn much crazy trouble in the party."

He laughed and lit a cigarette.

"Dick," he said, shaking his head, "the trouble with you is that you've been around with those white artists on the North Side too much. You even talk like 'em. You've got to know your own people."

"I think I know them," I said, realizing that I could never really talk with him. "I've been inside of three fourths of the Negroes' homes on the South Side."

"But you've got to work with 'em," he said.

"I was working with Ross until I was suspected of being a spy," I said.

"Dick," he spoke seriously now, "the party has decided that you are to accept this task."

I was silent. I knew the meaning of what he had said. A decision was the highest injunction that a Communist could receive from his party, and to break a decision was to break the effectiveness of the party's ability to act. In principle I heartily agreed with this, for I knew that it was impossible for working people to forge instruments of political power until they had achieved unity of action. Oppressed for centuries, divided, hopeless, corrupted, misled, they were cynical—as I had once been—and the Communist method of unity

had been found historically to be the only means of achieving discipline. In short, Nealson had asked me directly if I were a Communist or not. I wanted to be a Communist, but my kind of Communist, I wanted to shape people's feelings, awaken their hearts. But I could not tell Nealson that; he would only have snorted.

"I'll organize the committee and turn it over to someone else," I suggested.

"You don't want to do this, do you?" he asked.

"No," I said firmly.

"What would you like to do on the South Side, then?"

"I'd like to organize Negro artists," I said.

"But the party doesn't need that now," he said.

I rose, knowing that he had no intention of letting me go after I had organized the committee. I wanted to tell him that I was through, but I was not ready to bring matters to a head. I went out, angry with myself, angry with him, angry with the party. Well, I had not broken the decision, but neither had I accepted it wholly. I had dodged, trying to save time for writing, time to think.

10

MY TASK consisted in attending meetings until the late hours of the night, taking part in discussions, or lending myself generally along with other Communists in leading the people of the South Side. We debated the housing situation, the best means of forcing the city to authorize open hearings on conditions among Negroes. I gritted my teeth as the daily value of pork chops was tabulated, longing to be at home with my writing.

Nealson was cleverer than I and he confronted me before I had a chance to confront him. I was summoned one night to meet Nealson and a "friend." When I arrived at a South Side hotel I was introduced to a short, yellow man who carried himself like Napoleon. He wore glasses, kept his full lips pursed as though he were engaged in perpetual thought. He swaggered when he walked. He spoke slowly, precisely, trying to charge each of his words with more meaning than the words were able to carry. He talked of trivial things in lofty tones. He said that his name was Smith, that he was from Washington, that he planned to launch a national organization among Negroes to federalize all existing Negro institutions so as to achieve a broad unity of action. The three of us sat at a table, facing one another. I knew that another and last offer was about to be made to me, and if I did not accept it, there would be open warfare.

"Wright, how would you like to go to Switzerland?" Smith asked with dramatic suddenness.

"I'd like it," I said. "But I'm tied up with work now."

"You can drop that," Nealson said. "This is important."

"What would I do in Switzerland?" I asked.

"You'll go as a youth delegate," Smith said. "From there you can go to the Soviet Union."

"Much as I'd like to, I'm afraid I can't make it," I said honestly. "I simply cannot drop the writing I'm doing now."

"We sat looking at one another, smoking silently."

"Has Nealson told you how I feel?" I asked Smith.

"Smith did not answer. He stared at me a long time, then spat: 'Wright, you're a fool!'"

I rose. Smith turned away from me. A breath more of anger and I should have driven my fist into his face. Nealson laughed sheepishly, smorting.

"Was that necessary?" I asked, trembling.

I stood recalling how, in my boyhood, I would have fought until blood ran had anyone said anything like that to me. But I was a man now and master of my rage, able to control the surging emotions. I put on my hat and walked to the door. "Keep cool," I said to myself. "Don't let this get out of hand."

"This is good-bye," I said.

I attended the next unit meeting and asked for a place on the agenda, which was readily granted. Nealson was there. Evans was there. Ed Green was there. When my time came to speak, I said:—

"Comrades, for the past two years I've worked daily with most of you. Despite this, I have for some time found myself in a difficult position in the party. What has caused this difficulty is a long story which I do not care to recite now; it would serve no purpose. But I tell you honestly that I think I've found a solution of my difficulty. I am proposing here tonight that my membership be dropped from the party rolls. No ideological differences impel me to say this. I simply do not wish to be bound any longer by the party's decisions. I should like to retain my membership in those organizations in which the party has influence, and I shall comply with the party's program in those organizations. I hope that my word will be accepted in the spirit in which they are said. Perhaps sometime in the future I can meet and talk with the leaders of the party as to what tasks I can best perform."

I sat down amid a profound silence. The Negro secretary of the meeting looked frightened, glancing at Nealson, Evans, and Ed Green.

"Is there any discussion on Comrade Wright's statement?" the secretary asked finally.

"I move that discussion on Wright's statement be deferred," Nealson said.

A quick vote confirmed Nealson's motion. I looked about the silent room, then reached for my hat and rose.

"I should like to go now," I said.

No one said anything. I walked to the door and out into the night and a heavy burden seemed to lift from my shoulders. I was free. And I had done it in a decent and forthright manner. I had not been bitter. I had not raked up a single recrimination. I had attacked no one. I had disavowed nothing.

The next night two Negro Communists called at my home. They pretended to be ignorant of what had happened at the unit meeting. Patiently I explained what had occurred.

"Your story does not agree with what Nealson says," they said, revealing the motive of their visit.

"And what does Nealson say?" I asked.

"He says that you are in league with a Trotakvite group, and that you made an appeal for other party members to follow you in leaving the party."

"What?" I gasped. "That's not true. I asked that my membership be dropped. I raised no political issues." What did this mean? I sat pondering. "Look, maybe I ought to make my break with the party clean. If Nealson's going to act this way, I'll resign."

"You can't resign," they told me.

"What do you mean?" I demanded.

"No one can resign from the Communist Party."

I looked at them and laughed.

"You're talking crazy," I said.

"Nealson would expel you publicly, cut the ground from under your feet if you resigned," they said. "People would think that something was wrong if someone like you quit here on the South Side."

I was angry. Was the party so weak and uncertain of itself that it could not accept what I had said at the unit meeting? Who thought up such tactics? Then, suddenly, I understood. These were the secret, underground tactics of the political movement of the Communists under the tsars of Old Russia! The Communist Party felt that it had to assassinate me morally merely because I did not want to be bound by its decisions. I saw now that my comrades were acting out a fantasy that had no relation whatever to the reality of their environment.

"Tell Nealson that if he fights me, then, by God, I'll fight him," I said. "If he leaves this damn thing where it is, then all right. If he thinks I won't fight him publicly, he's crazy!"

man. He suffered from asthma and would snort at unexpected intervals. Now and then he would punctuate his flow of words by taking a nip from a bottle of whiskey. He had traveled half around the world and his talk was pitted with vague allusions to European cities. I met him in his apartment, listened to him intently, observed him minutely, for I knew that I was facing one of the leaders of World Communism.

"Hello, Wright," he snorted. "I've heard about you."

As we shook hands he burst into a loud, seemingly senseless laugh; and as he guffawed I could not tell whether his mirth was directed at me or was meant to hide his uneasiness.

"I hope what you've heard about me is good," I parried.

"Sit down," he laughed again, waving me to a chair. "Yes, they tell me you write."

"I try to," I said.

"You can write," he snorted. "I read that article you wrote for the *New Masses* about Joe Louis. Good stuff. First political treatment of sports we've yet had. Ha-ha."

I waited. I had thought that I should encounter a man of ideas, but he was not that. Then perhaps he was a man of action? But that was not indicated either.

"They tell me that you are a friend of Ross," he shot at me.

I paused before answering. He had not asked me directly, but had hinted in a neutral, teasing way. Ross, I had been told, was slated for expulsion from the party on the ground that he was "anti-leadership"; and if a member of the Communist International was asking me if I was a friend of a man about to be expelled, he was indirectly asking me if I was loyal or not.

"Ross is not particularly a friend of mine," I said frankly. "But I know him well; in fact, quite well."

"If he isn't your friend, how do you happen to know him so well?" he asked, laughing to soften the sharp threat of his question.

"I was writing an account of his life and I know him as well, perhaps, as anybody," I told him.

"I heard about that," he said. "Wright. Ha-ha. Say, let me call you Dick, huh?"

"Go ahead," I said.

"Dick," he said, "Ross is a nationalist." He paused to let the weight of his accusation sink in. He meant that Ross's militancy was extreme. "We Communists don't dramatize Negro nationalism," he said in a voice that laughed, accused, and withdrew.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"We're not advertising Ross." He spoke directly now.

"We're talking about two different things," I said. "You seem worried about my making Ross popular because he is your political opponent. But I'm not concerned about Ross's politics at all. The man struck me as one who typified certain traits of the Negro migrant. I've already sold a story based upon an incident in his life."

Neelson became excited.

"What was the incident?" he asked.

"Some trouble he got into when he was thirteen years old," I said.

"Oh, I thought it was political," he said, shrugging.

"But I'm telling you that you are wrong about that," I explained. "I'm not trying to fight you with my writing. I've no political ambitions. You must believe that. I'm trying to depict Negro life."

"Have you finished writing about Ross?"

"No," I said. "I dropped the idea. Our party members were suspicious of me and were afraid to talk." He laughed.

"Dick," he began, "we're short of forces. We're facing a grave crisis."

"The party's always facing a crisis," I said.

His smile left and he stared at me.

"You're not cynical, are you, Dick?" he asked.

"No," I said. "But it's the truth. Each week, each month there's a crisis."

"You're a funny guy," he said, laughing, snorting again. "But we've got a job to do. We're altering our work. Fascism's the danger, the danger now to all people."

"I understand," I said.

"We've got to defeat the Fascists," he said, snorting from asthma. "We've discussed you and know your abilities. We want you to work with us. We've got to crash out of our narrow way of working and get our message to the church people, students, club people, professionals, middle class."

"I've been called names," I said softly. "Is that crashing out of the narrow way?"

"Forget that," he said.

He had not denied the name-calling. That meant that, if I did not obey him, the name-calling would begin again.

"I don't know if I fit into things," I said openly.

"We want to trust you with an important assignment," he said.

"What do you want me to do?"

"We want you to organize a committee against the high cost of living."

"The high cost of living?" I exclaimed. "What do I know about such things?"

I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST

by RICHARD WRIGHT

9

When the John Reed clubs now dissolved, I was free of all party relations. I avoided unit meetings for fear of being subjected to discipline. Occasionally a Negro Communist—defying the code that enjoined him to shun suspect elements—came to my home and informed me of the current charges that Communists were bringing against one another. To my astonishment I heard that Buddy Nealson had branded me a “smuggler of reaction.”

Buddy Nealson was the Negro who had formulated the Communist position for the American Negro; he had made speeches in the Kremlin; he had spoken before Stalin himself.

“Why does Nealson call me that?” I asked.

“He says that you are a petty bourgeois degenerate,” I was told.

“What does that mean?”

“He says that you are corrupting the party with your ideas.”

“How?”

There was no answer. I decided that my relationship with the party was about over; I should have to leave it. The attacks were growing worse, and my refusal to react incited Nealson into coining more absurd phrases. I was termed a “bastard intellectual,” an “incipient Trotskyite”; it was claimed that I possessed an “anti-leadership attitude” and that I was manifesting “scraphim tendencies”—a phrase meaning that one has withdrawn from the struggle of life and considers oneself infallible.

Working all day and writing half the night brought me down with a severe chest ailment. While I was ill, a knock came at my door one morning. My

another admitted Ed Green, the man who had demanded to know what use I planned to make of the material I was collecting from the comrades. I stared at him as I lay abed and I knew that he considered me a clever and sworn enemy of the party. Bitterness welled up in me.

“What do you want?” I asked bluntly. “You see I’m ill.”

“I have a message from the party for you,” he said.

I had not said good day, and he had not offered to say it. He had not smiled, and neither had I. He looked curiously at my bleak room.

“This is the home of a bastard intellectual,” I cut at him.

He stared without blinking. I could not endure his standing there so stone-like. Common decency made me say, “Sit down.”

His shoulders stiffened.

“I’m in a hurry.” He spoke like an army officer.

“What do you want to tell me?”

“Do you know Buddy Nealson?” he asked.

I was suspicious. Was this a political trap?

“What about Buddy Nealson?” I asked, committing myself to nothing until I knew the kind of reality I was grappling with.

“He wants to see you,” Ed Green said.

“What about?” I asked, still suspicious.

“He wants to talk with you about your party work,” he said.

“I’m ill and can’t see him until I’m well,” I said.

Ed Green stood for a fraction of a second, then turned on his heel and marched out of the room.

When my chest healed, I sought an appointment with Buddy Nealson. He was a short, black man with an ever ready smile, thick lips, a furtive manner, and a greasy, sweaty look. His bearing was nervous, self-conscious; he seemed always to be hiding some deep irritation. He spoke in short, jerky sentences, hopping nimbly from thought to thought, as though his mind worked in a free, associational

RICHARD WRIGHT is an American Negro whose schooling carried him through the grammar grades, and who has been educating himself ever since. His novel, *Native Son*, which was widely discussed in the year of its publication (1940), and his forthcoming autobiography, which will appear later this year, proclaim him as one of the most forthright and eloquent authors of his race.

This is the second of two installments.

WRIGHT
187

STANDARD FORM NO. 64

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

LVO 100-135-

TO : MR. STRICKLAND *for*
FROM : MR. E. H. WINTERROWD
SUBJECT: COMMUNIST EXPLOITATION OF NEGROES
(Richard Wright)
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

DATE: October 12, 1944

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Coffey _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____
Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Mr. Mohr _____
Mr. Carson _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Mumford _____
Mr. Jones _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____
Tele. Room _____
Mr. Nease _____
Miss Beahm _____
Miss Gandy _____

There are attached for record purposes two photostatic copies of Wright's second installment of "I Tried To Be A Communist" appearing in the September, 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly, beginning on page 48.

Attachment

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/ase

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

100-157464-14

170

14 OCT 13 1944

EX-3

WRIGATIR

188 50 OCT 22 1944

51

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7E with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
101-157464-13 pg 2.

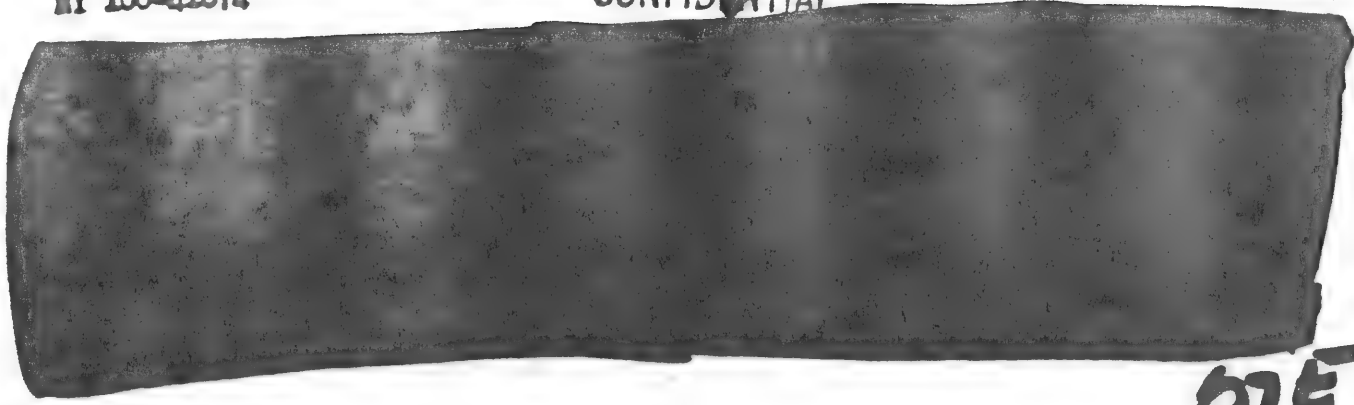
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 189

 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

NY 100-42674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~



67E

ARTICLES IN ATLANTIC MONTHLY:

Subject, RICHARD WRIGHT's articles appearing in the August and September, 1944 issues of the "ATLANTIC MONTHLY" magazine were emphatically brought to the public's attention by considerable publicity in the New York newspapers.

On July 28, 1944 the New York Herald Tribune gave a lengthy article entitled, "NEGRO AUTHOR CRITICIZES REDS AS INTOLERANT". This article states that WRIGHT in discussing his break with the Communists said that the Party fears new ideas, and that the Communists position regarding the American Negro has undergone a "distinct and lamentable regression," in recent years. He described the Communists as "narrow-minded, bigoted, intolerant and frightened of new ideas which don't fit into their own." The Herald Tribune's article referred to WRIGHT's article in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY.

In an interview, Mr. WRIGHT is reported to have stated that his Communist Party membership roughly covered the period from the latter part of 1932 or early 1933 to 1940, and his early association with the Communists in Chicago was broken in 1937 when he said he was "ejected" from the Party. WRIGHT stated that he was reinstated in New York in 1937 and maintained a relationship with the Party until 1940 when he left the Party. [The paper quoted WRIGHT as saying, "Publicly, Communists will deny that there is any substantial change in their militancy but privately they offer any handy excuse. The militancy on the Negro question has passed into the hands of right-wing Negroes. That was not true eight years ago. Most of the battles then were led by Communists." He said further that he did not regard the Communists of today as effective instruments for social change, and described them as being too much the victims of the very society they are trying to change, resulting

WRIGHT, R. 190

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

often in intolerance and narrowness.

A similar article appeared in the New York Journal-American for July 28, 1944 entitled "REDS ALL WRONG, WRIGHT QUITS 'EM". This article states that until recently WRIGHT was one of the high priests of the Communist Party staunchly defending Red ideology as the only possible political philosophy for his race, but today he is hurling epithets at his former Communist comrades. This article also referred to the story appearing in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY and quoted the same statements which appeared in the other newspapers.

The Washington Field Office also forwarded a letter to the New York office bringing to its attention an item from the column, "The World Today" by GEORGE S. SCHUYLER appearing in the August 5, 1944 issue of the Pittsburgh Courier. This item called attention to WRIGHT's articles in the Atlantic Monthly and commented briefly upon it.

It is also interesting to note that considerable publicity was given WRIGHT's articles in the Daily Worker newspaper. In the Daily Worker for August 6, 1944, the column by BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR. entitled, "New Times" contains what it terms "a few words on RICHARD WRIGHT and New Ideas". DAVIS considers first the promises of WRIGHT as an author, which was indicated by his book, "Native Son". He then refers to what he calls the public and wholly unjustifiable attack on the Communists, who were the very organization whose outlooks had helped WRIGHT create his masterpiece. DAVIS stated that according to WRIGHT's statements, he withdrew from the Communists in 1940. DAVIS asked why he waited until now to make this break public and questions whom WRIGHT is trying to impress. DAVIS refers to WRIGHT's attitude as a form of superleftism which puts him in a class with NORMAN THOMAS and other "Red-Baters". DAVIS comments that this attack by WRIGHT comes at a crucial election time when the future state of the negroes requires the re-election of Roosevelt.

It is also noted that in the Daily Worker of August 15, 1944 an article by ROBERT MINOR is entitled, "Mr. WRIGHT DIDN'T DISCOVER IT". MINOR begins his article with the comment that in the half dozen years that RICHARD WRIGHT was a member of the Communist Party he did not discover that the Communists have no concern whatsoever with persuading people to be loyal to the Communist organization per se; that WRIGHT did not discover that the only thing required is that you be loyal to the peoples cause and that if you are that then loyalty to the Communist organization will take care of itself.

MINOR says that in WRIGHT's article in the ATLANTIC MONTHLY he takes a position on far bigger questions than whether a person likes Communists. He says that RICHARD WRIGHT forgot the fight of the Negro people and has taken

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

up the cause of those who are endeavoring to accentuate racial divisions. He points out that in his article WRIGHT in several instances refers to individuals as "a Jewish chap", "a Jewish boy", and "his Jewish wife".

In answer to the question purposely put by Mr. MINOR, "Can We Do Without RICHARD WRIGHT?", MINOR says "Yes", that any great movement of the people can do without any individual.

It appears from the fact that articles were written concerning Mr. WRIGHT's, "I Tried To Be a Communist", by both BENJAMIN J. DAVIS, JR. and ROBERT MINOR that the Communist organization has laid considerable importance upon this statement by WRIGHT. The matter even reached the Broadway Columns and appeared in the column of DANTON WALKER in the New York Daily News of August 28, 1944, wherein it is stated that "RICHARD WRIGHT, author of 'Native Son', has started an uproar with his two-part serial in the Atlantic Monthly called 'I Tried to Be a Communist.'"

[REDACTED]

b1
b2
b7
b7
c
c

NY 100-41674

CONFIDENTIAL

REVIEW OF ATLANTIC MONTHLY ARTICLES:

"I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST" by RICHARD WRIGHT.

The first article appeared in the August 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly magazine and commenced with an invitation which WRIGHT received from a group of white boys he had known while working in the Post Office in Chicago. He stated that he was amazed to learn that many of these boys had his work in the John Reed Club. In regard to the Communist literature which he first read he stated that "it was not the economics of Communism, nor the great power of trade Unions, nor the excitement of underground politics that claimed me; my attention was caught by the similarity of the experiences of workers in other lands, by the possibility of uniting scattered but kindred peoples into a whole. It seemed to me that here at last, in the realm of revolutionary expression, Negro experience could find a home, a functioning value and role"

WRIGHT became a leader in the John Reed Club and contributed to such publications as "Left Front", "Anvil, and "New Masses". In his presentation WRIGHT points out that his first misunderstanding with other Negro Communists grew out of the fact that because of his publications and writing they classified him as an intellectual.

He also had difficulty with the Party in Chicago because of his efforts to learn of the life of one ROSS, a Negro Communist. WRIGHT says that ROSS typified the effective street agitator, and was a Southern born Negro who had migrated to the North, and whose life reflected the crude hopes and frustrations of the peasant in the city. WRIGHT felt that if he could get ROSS' story he could make known some of the difficulties inherent in the adjustment of a folk people to an urban environment. Word spread of this activity of WRIGHT in the Communist Party, and he was warned to stop such activities.

These articles by WRIGHT are auto-biographical in nature, and WRIGHT points out at this time that he gave up the idea of biographical sketches on individuals he met, and settled upon writing short stories using the material he had gotten from ROSS and his friends. One such story was published in an anthology under the title of "Big Boy Leaves Home."

WRIGHT, R. 193

CONFIDENTIAL

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT attended the National John Reed congress in the summer of 1934 and was stunned at the decision announced by a nationally known Communist to dissolve the clubs. WRIGHT said that he asked "Why", and was told that the dissolution was because the clubs did not serve the new peoples front policy.

The concluding portion of this first article deals with WRIGHTS attempts at the Congress of American Writers held in New York City in 1935.

The second article in the September 1944 issue of the Atlantic Monthly commences with WRIGHT's work after the dissolution of the John Reed Clubs. He said that at this time he avoided unit meetings for fear of being subjected to discipline. He tells them in an assignment by the Party directing him to organize a committee against the high cost of living, and he subsequently entered into this work. Later on he was asked to go to Switzerland as a Youth Delegate and then to the Soviet Union, but he refused because it would have interfered with his writing.

He relates the story of a unit meeting at which he requested that his membership be dropped from the Party rolls, although he desired to retain his membership in those organizations in which the Party has influence, and hoped that sometime in the future he could meet and talk with Party leaders as to what tasks he could best perform. Wright tells of unjustified attacks by other members on which he was labeled "a Trotskyite" and accused of other ideas contrary to those of the Communist Party. A considerable portion of this final article is devoted to the trial within the Communist Party of WRIGHT's friend ROSS concerning whom he had once accumulated material for with the purpose of using it in his writings. He dwells at considerable length on the development of the charges in this trial, the manner of its conduction and the presentation of charges including the attitude of the members present. He pictures the trial as being as such a nature so talkatively presented and so sincerely made and with the ultimate charges being made by the accused's best friends, so that it resulted in the confession of the accused that he was guilty of the charges. In regard to ROSS at the conclusion of the trial, WRIGHT states "his voice broke in a sob, no one prodded him. No one tortured him. No one threatened him. He was free to go out of the hall and never see another Communist, but he did not want to. He could not. The vision of the communal world had sunk down into his soul and it would never leave him until life left him. He talked on, outlining how he had erred, how he would reform." WRIGHT continues, "I knew, as I sat there, that there were many people who thought they knew life who had been skeptical of the Moscow trials. But they could not have been skeptical had they witnessed this astonishing trial. Ross had not been doped; he had been awakened. It was not a fear of the Communist Party that had made him confess but a fear of the punishment that he

WRIGHT, R. 194

CONF ID

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

would exact of himself that made him tell of his wrongdoings. The Communists had talked to him until they had given him new eyes with which to see his own crime. And they sat back and listened to him tell how he had erred. He was one with all the members there, regardless of race or color; his heart was theirs and their hearts were his; and when a man reaches that state of kinship with others, that degree of oneness, or when a trial has made him kin after he has been sundered from them by wrongdoing, then he must rise and say, out of a sense of the deepest morality in the world: 'I'm guilty. Forgive me.'

WRIGHT continues with the comment, "This, to me, was a spectacle of glory; and yet, because it had condemned me, because it was blind and ignorant, I felt that it was a spectacle of horror. The blindness of their limited lives—lives truncated and impoverished by the oppression they had suffered long before they had ever heard of Communism—made them think that I was with their enemies. American life had so corrupted their consciousness that they were unable to recognize their friends when they saw them. I knew that if they had held state power I should have been declared guilty of treason and my execution would have followed. And I knew that they felt, with all the strength of their black blindness, that they were right."

The foregoing portion of WRIGHT's article has been quoted because of the fact that it is believed significant in indicating that WRIGHT disapproves whole heartedly of the American way of life and living even though he has publicly at this time announced a breach with the Communist Party organization.

The concluding portion of his article tells of his transfer from the Federal Experiment Theater to the Federal Writers Project and leads up to the event of May Day 1936 when WRIGHT was refused the right to march in the parade and was physically rejected from the line of march by white Communists while other Communists, white and black, looked on without coming to his assistance. WRIGHT again refers to the blindness of these individuals and made the statement "I remembered the stories I had written, the stories in which I had assigned a role of honor and glory to the Communist Party, and I was glad that they were down in black and white, were finished. For I knew in my heart that I should never be able to write that way again, should never be able to feel with that simple sharpness about life, should never again express such passionate hope, should never again make so total a commitment of faith."

He then tells of his resolution to write and to do what he could by his writing to fight and to create a sense of the hunger for life that gnaws in us all, to keep alive in our hearts a sense of the inexpressibly human."

In regard to the articles by WRIGHT it may be noted that these two

WRIGHT, R. 195

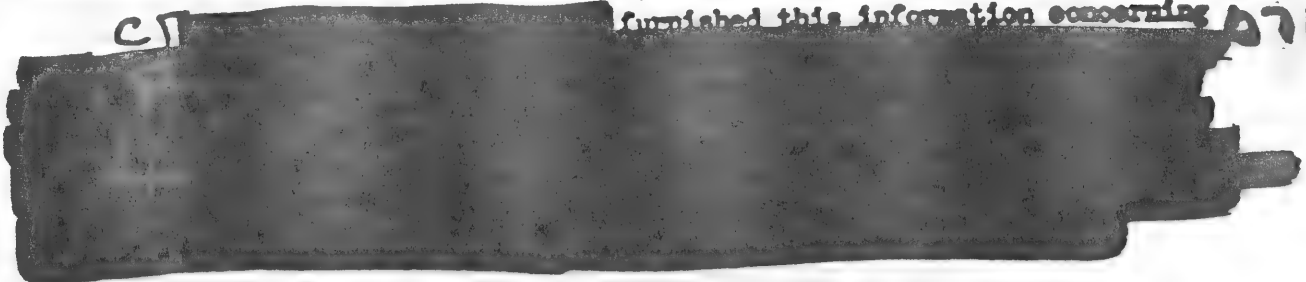
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

articles were originally the final portion of WRIGHT's new book, as yet unpublished, an autobiography entitled, "Black Boy".

furnished this information concerning



In view of the fact that the publicity and the information furnished by informants indicated WRIGHT's break with the Communist Party was an actual fact, it was felt that a discreet and careful interview with WRIGHT might be productive. However, it was ascertained on August 31, 1944 that WRIGHT is presently on his vacation and will not be back in New York City until about September 15, 1944.

P E N D I N G

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, R. 196

48

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

UNDEVELOPED LEAD

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

AT BROOKLYN, NEW YORK- Will, after careful consideration,
discreetly interview subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the
Communist Party.

Did it happen?

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

WRIGHT, P. 197

49

NY 100-41674

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b1
b2
b7D

A confidential symbol was used for [REDACTED] to protect the identity of the informant because of [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] also because of the information he furnished.

b1

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET7

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b1: b7c with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

100-157464-12 enclosure

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXWRIGHT, R
199
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, NEW YORK**

CONFIDENTIAL FILE NO. 100-157464

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK	DATE WHEN MADE 9/5/44	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 7/28, 8/21, 31; 9/2/44	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]
TITLE RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE INTERNAL SECURITY-C

b7c

KEY FIGURE

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject continues to reside at 89 Lefferts Place, Apt. C23, Brooklyn, 16, N.Y. [REDACTED] Subject author of two articles appearing in ATLANTIC MONTHLY for August and September, 1944, entitled, "I Tried To Be A Communist". Theme of articles seems to conclude with thought that subject broke with party because his friends in the Party, including those of his own race, were unable to recognize him as their friend. Articles do not appear to attack Communist Party as as revolutionary club, but because of failure of individuals in Party who properly recognize and deal with problems in society. Articles received wide-spread newspaper publication. Reports of informants and publicity indicates prominent Party members concerned over WRIGHT's articles. WRIGHT has authored new book "Black Boy", an autobiography which is not expected to appear until next year. ATLANTIC MONTHLY articles were originally final portion of this book.

b7E

AGENCY
REC'D
SEP 10 1944
NEW YORK

b7c

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE
dated 7/8/44

b7c

REFERENCES:

Bureau File 100-157464.
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED]
at New York, New York.

DETAILS:

Subject has been considered a Key Figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division.

CONFIDENTIAL

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>E. C. Conroy</i> SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5-Bureau 1-Col. S.V. Constant-D. of I., 2SC 3-New York	100-157464-13
	RECORDED INDEXED CLASS. & EXT. BY 62 REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2 DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81
57 OCT 26 1944	COPY IN FILE

b7c

WRIGHT, R 200

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

100-157464-6 enclosure

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 201

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____

- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
100-157464-7 enclosure

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

31478

Form No. 1
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, N. Y.

FILE NO. 100-15433

b7c

REPORT MADE AT WASHINGTON, D. C.	DATE WHEN MADE 6/9/44	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 5/27, 29/44	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED] LS
TITLE ① RICHARD WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE S - C SECURITY MATTER - C

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

[REDACTED] (C)

b1
b7D

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP - 3 class
DATE 10-21-81 enc

- RUC -

AGENCY 100-111113
REQ. REC'D 7-1-44
REP'T FORW. 7-1-44
BY [REDACTED]

b7c

DETAILS:

AT WASHINGTON, D. C.

[REDACTED]

b1
b2
b7C

A review of the indices of the Washington Field Office indicated that the person referred to [REDACTED] was undoubtedly a nationally prominent negro author by the name of RICHARD WRIGHT, who resides in New York City. It was found that numerous references to this RICHARD WRIGHT have been made in the Daily Worker over the course of years, and that information with regard to him has also been developed by the Special Committee on Un-American Activities, House of Representatives, Honorable MARTIN DIES, Chairman.

[REDACTED]

b1
b2
b7C

APPROVED AND FORWARDED [Signature]	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	RECORDED
COPIES OF THIS REPORT DESTROYED		100-157414-8	INDEXED
5 - Bureau	2 - New York AUG 28 1960	31	1.5 b7c
2 - Washington Field	CLASS. EXT. BY SP-8 BTJ	INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE	
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2			

WR: [Signature]
203

WFO #100-15433

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

b1
b7c
b7c

[REDACTED] C

In view of the fact that RICHARD WRIGHT is reported to reside in New York City and inasmuch as there is no further investigation to be conducted with regard to him in Washington, D. C., the New York City office is being designated office of origin herein and this case is being considered referred upon completion to that office.

- REFERRED UPON COMPLETION TO THE OFFICE OF ORIGIN -

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-15433

WRIGHT, R. 204

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT **NEW YORK, N. Y.**

NY FILE NO. **100-41674** ED

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK, N. Y.	DATE WHEN MADE 7/8/44	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 5/24; 6/1-3/44	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED]
TITLE RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE INTERNAL SECURITY - C

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

KEY FIGURE

Subject presently resides 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, NY.
Registered with SS LDB #178; classified 4F, 1/31/44.

[REDACTED] b7c
[REDACTED] b7c
[REDACTED] b7c

AGENCY
REC'D
REF. FORM.

REFERENCE:

Bureau File No. 100-157464.
Report of Special Agent [REDACTED]
New York City.

dated 5/28/43 at

DETAILS:

Although it is noted that referenced report of Special Agent [REDACTED] was a Closing Report, in view of the fact that Subject is considered a key figure in Communist activities in the New York Field Division, this case was reopened and the activities of Subject have been followed.

[REDACTED] b7c
[REDACTED] b7c

APPROVED AND FORWARDED <i>[Signature]</i>	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES
COPIES OF THIS REPORT 5 - Bureau 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, D of I, ZSC 3 - New York		100-157464-9 JUL 10 1944 ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED DATE 8-25-85 BY SP8/BK
COPY IN FILE		RECORDED INDEXED

WRIGHT
205

NY 100-41674

[REDACTED]

b7D

[REDACTED]

b2
b7D

[REDACTED]

b7D

It has been ascertained that the Subject presently resides at 89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C23, Brooklyn 16, New York. Inquiry in the neighborhood of his former residence, Columbia Heights, at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York, produced no information of value to this investigation.

[REDACTED]

b2
b7D

As previously reported, Subject is registered with Selective Service Local Draft Board No. 178 and has Order No. 2025. On June 1st, 1944, Agent interviewed [REDACTED] who advised that Subject had been classified 4-F on January 31, 1944. His rejection by the armed forces on January 15, 1944 had been made with the noted reason: "psychoneurosis, severe, psychiatric rejection; referred to Local Board for further psychiatric and social investigation".

b7D

[REDACTED]

b7D

NY 100-41674

[REDACTED] b7C b7D

It appeared from Subject's contacts with his Local Board that his interest in the problem of the Negro has become almost an obsession and it was said that he apparently overlooks the fact that his own rise to success refutes many of his own statements regarding the impossibility of the Negro's improving his personal position. b7

[REDACTED]

From all the information concerning Subject in publications and according to information from Informants in the New York Office, Subject is continuing his activities as a writer. In addition to his better known books he has also been engaged in the writing of skits and stories, most of which concern the Negro. The publicity which has been received by Subject WRIGHT is typified by the rather lengthy review of his life appearing in the volume "Current Biography, 1940" published by the H. W. Wilson Company. This volume states that RICHARD WRIGHT, Author, was born September 4, 1908 and his present address is care of HARPER & BROTHERS, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City. It refers to him as a brilliant young Negro writer whose collection of short stories "Uncle Tom's Children" won a \$500 prize competition in 1938 and whose book "Native Son" was the March, 1940 selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club. Much of the article contains a review of the character and theme of that book.

✓
JRM
Jone

The life of RICHARD WRIGHT, beginning with his birth, September 4, 1908, on a plantation 25 miles from Natchez, Mississippi, is summarized, as follows:

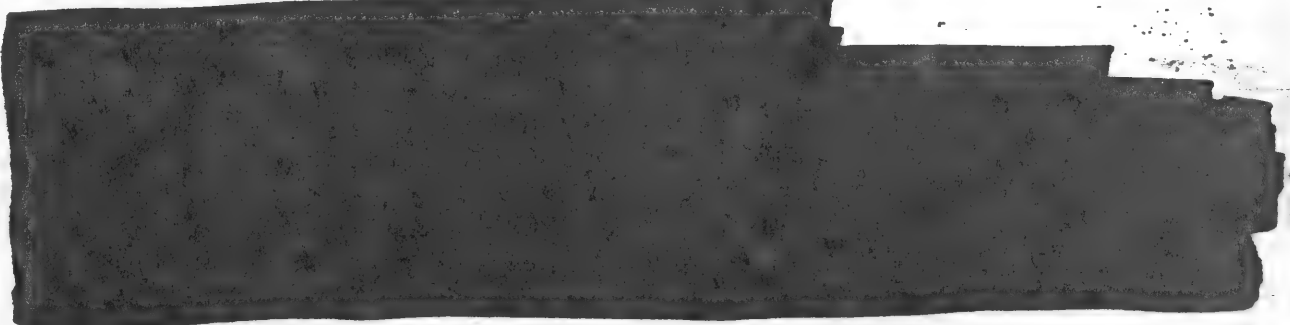
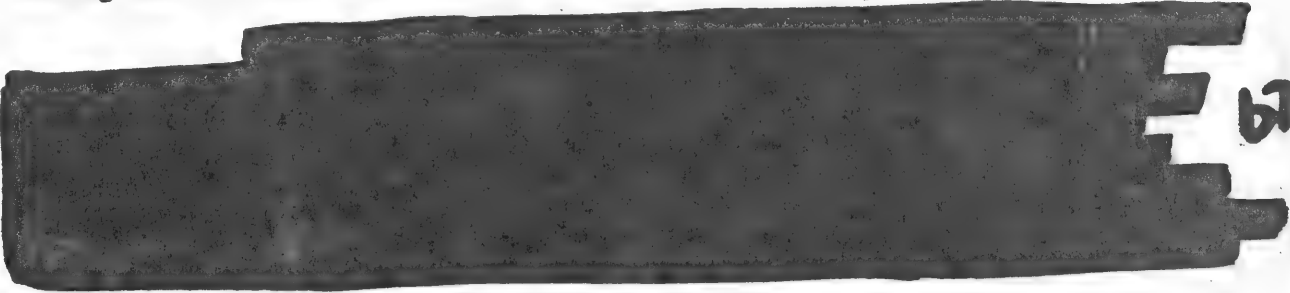
His father, NATHAN WRIGHT, was a mill worker and his mother, ELLEN WRIGHT, a country school teacher. The family was continually on the move so his education was very much neglected. When his mother was stricken with paralysis during the first world war, the Subject was sent to an uncle's house to live. WRIGHT is quoted as having stated that he did so much fighting, lying and school-cutting that he was sent back to his grandmother who predicted that he would end on the gallows. He was put in a 7th Day Adventist

NY 105-41674

School, taught by his aunt. At 15 he left home and went to Memphis and got a job as porter and messenger. During the subsequent years he worked his way all over the country working at any kind of job from ditch-digging to clerking in a post office. He drifted to Chicago where he had heard Negroes stood a better chance of getting jobs. He was a clerk for a while and in 1933 had a taste of politics. The review then quotes what is purportedly the Subject's own statement:

"I became an assistant precinct captain in the Republican Primary Election", he said, "I was promised a job. I didn't get it. Next time I became an assistant precinct captain for the Democrats and was promised a job, which I didn't get. So then I became a Red. Now I am what the papers refer to as a card-carrying Communist."

In 1935, WRIGHT was on the FEDERAL WRITERS' PROJECT in Chicago and had sold paper articles and some stories to the magazines. He came to New York in 1937 where he again got on the WRITERS' PROJECT. He wrote an essay on Harlem in the "New York Panorama". He also did some work on the "Daily Worker" and became a contributing editor of the "New Masses". In 1939, WRIGHT reportedly got a Guggenheim fellowship which enabled him to quit the Project and complete his novel "Native Son". He lived for some months during 1940 in Mexico but returned to the United States in November of 1940.



671

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET3

Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b7E with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

☐ For your information: _____

☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:

100-157464-9 pgs 5-7

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX

WRIGHT, R. 209

 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

NY 100-41674

UNDEVELOPED LEADS

NEW YORK FIELD DIVISION

At New York, N. Y. - Will follow and report
activities of Subject.



**Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO
FILE NO. **100-41674**

b7c

June 23, 1944

Director, FBI

RE: **RICHARD WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER
INTERNAL SECURITY - C**

Dear Sir:

It is recommended that a Security Index card be prepared relative to the individual named below:

Name: **RICHARD WRIGHT**
Aliases:

Residence Address: **89 Lefferts Place, Apartment C-23
Brooklyn 16, New York**

Business Address: **None**

☒ Native Born ☐ Alien ☐ Naturalized

☒ Communist ☐ German ☐ Miscellaneous

☐ Fascist (Italian) ☐ Japanese ☐

Date of Birth Sept. 4, 1908
Place of Birth Natchez, Mississippi
Entered U. S. _____ at _____
Naturalized (date) _____
Naturalized (place and Court) _____

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy
E. E. CONROY
SAC

100-157464

327489
F B I

RECORDED

28 JUN 29 1944

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/bee

WR 1947 REC 2 JK 18 1944
211

32

NY 100-41674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

In the report of Special Agent [REDACTED]
dated July 8, 1944 at New York, N. Y., the Confidential Informant is as
follows:

[REDACTED]

A temporary informant symbol is used to further
conceal the identity of this Informant. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

He was
followed by [REDACTED]
informants;
possibly
[REDACTED]

b7c

b2, b7

SAC-NYC
8-4-44

b7C

JUL 25 1944

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-8 BY SP8 BJS/ML

Mr. Tolson
Mr. E. A. Tamm
Mr. Clegg
Mr. Coffey
Mr. Glavin
Mr. Ladd
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tracy
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Carson
Mr. Hendon
Mr. Jones
Mr. Quinn
Mr. Nease

WASH FROM NEW YORK 2 28 1-14P

DIRECTOR URGENT

GAIN. RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT, IS-C. FOR THE BUREAU INFO ARTICLE
TODAYS NY HERALD TRIBUNE ENTITLED "NEGRO AUTHOR CRITICIZES REDS AS IN-
TOLERANT", STATES THAT RICHARD WRIGHT, AUTHOR OF "NATIVE SON" IN DIS-
CUSSING HIS OWN BREAK WITH COMMUNIST PARTY SAYS PARTY FEARS NEW IDEAS
AND THAT COMMUNIST POSITION ON AMERICAN NEGRO HAS UNDERGONE A "DISTIN-
GUISHED AND LAMENTABLE REGRESSION" IN RECENT YEARS. WRIGHT WAS FURTHER CRE-
DITED WITH DESCRIBING COMMUNISTS AS "NARROW MINDED, BIGOTED, INTOLERANT
AND FRIGHTENED OF NEW IDEAS WHICH DONT FIT INTO THEIR OWN." THE HERALD
TRIBUNE FURTHER STATES THAT MR WRIGHTS REMARKS WERE PROMPTED BY QUESTIONS
GROWING OUT OF AN ARTICLE WHICH HE HAS WRITTEN FOR THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY
FOR AUGUST UNDER THE TITLE OF "I TRIED TO BE A COMMUNIST." THE TRIBUNE
FURTHER STATES THAT IN THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY ARTICLE THE AUTHOR OF "NATIVE
SON" DISCUSSES HIS EARLIEST EXPERIENCES AS A CP MEMBER IN CHICAGO TRYING
ON THE PROBLEMS HE FACED IN TRYING TO PRESENT HIS OWN IDEAS TO THE
PARTY. FURTHERMORE THE AUGUST ATLANTIC MONTHLY DESCRIBES THE ARTICLE
AS THE FIRST OF TWO INSTALLMENTS AND MR WRIGHT ADVISED THE TRIBUNE RE-
PRESENTATIVE YESTERDAY THAT HE WOULD NOT DISCUSS THE SPECIFIC DETAILS

COPIES DESTROYED

WRIGHT, R
213

23 AUG 8 1944
e. e. - 2

NY2 PAGE 2

OF THE CHICAGO BREAK WITH THE COMMUNISTS BECAUSE THESE WILL BE COVERED
IN THE SECOND MAGAZINE ARTICLE. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED THE TRIBUNE
THAT HIS CP MEMBERSHIP COVERED THE PERIOD, ROUGHLY, FROM THE LATTER
PART OF NINETEEN THIRTYTWO TO NINETEEN FORTY AND THAT HIS EARLY ASSO-
CIATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS IN CHICAGO HAS BEEN BROKEN IN NINETEEN
THIRTYSEVEN WHEN HE WAS EJECTED FROM THE SAME. WRIGHT FURTHER ADVISED
THAT HE WAS ON THE OUTS WITH THE PARTY FROM MAY UNTIL AUGUST THIRTY
SEVEN AND THAT HE WAS REINSTATED IN NY IN SUCH YEAR AND "MAINTAINED
A RELATIONSHIP" WITH THE PARTY UNTIL FORTY WHEN HE SAID HE LEFT THE
SAME. THE TRIBUNE ARTICLE DISCUSSING WRIGHTS COMMENTS ABOUT THE LAME
TABLE REGRESSION OF THE CP POSITION ON THE AMERICAN NEGRO CREDITED MR.
WRIGHT WITH STATING "PUBLICLY COMMUNISTS WILL DENY THAT THERE IS ANY
SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THEIR MILITANCY, BUT PRIVATELY THEY OFFER ANY
HANDY EXCUSE. THE MILITANCY OF THE NEGRO QUESTION HAS PASSED INTO THE
HANDS OF RIGHT WING NEGROES. THAT WAS NOT TRUE EIGHT YEARS AGO. MOST
OF THE BATTLES THEN WERE LED BY COMMUNISTS." THE ARTICLE FURTHER STA-
TED THAT IN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION AS TO WHAT CAUSED THE CHICAGO RIFT
BETWEEN HIM AND THE COMMUNISTS WRIGHT HAD STATED "IT WAS AN ACCUMULAT
OF MANY THINGS - NOT SO MUCH A LEAVING AS AN EJECTION OF A DIFFERENCE
OF OPINION. I HAD MY WAY OF EXPRESSING MY CONCEPTION OF NEGRO EXPER-
END PAGE TWO

WRIGHT, R. 214

34

NY2 PAGE THREE

88
[PR waiver as per FBI man]
IENCE IN WRITING. I THOUGHT IT WOULD BE OF VALUE TO THEM. THEY HAD
THEIR IDEAS OF HOW I SHOULD REACT AS A COMMUNIST. THERE WAS AN IRRE
CONCILABLE GAP BETWEEN OUR ATTITUDES. I DO NOT REGARD THE COMMUNIST
TODAY AS EFFECTIVE INSTRUMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE." WRIGHT FURTHER
ADVISED THE TRIBUNE THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE A TERRIBLE LOT TO LEARN
ABOUT PEOPLE. COMMUNISTS PECULIARLY ARE TOO MUCH THE VICTIMS OF THE
VERY SOCIETY THEY ARE TRYING TO CHANGE. THIS TOO OFTEN FINDS EXPRES
IN INTOLERANCE AND NARROWNESS." AT THE PRESENT TIME THE NY OFFICE H
UNDER CONSIDERATION THE ADVISABILITY OF INTERVIEWING MR WRIGHT.

CONROY

HOLD

WRIGHT, R. 215

then CONSIDER
Poss. of TURN
into
INPRIM

LVO
100-157464-11

August 4, 1944

SAC - New York City

John Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

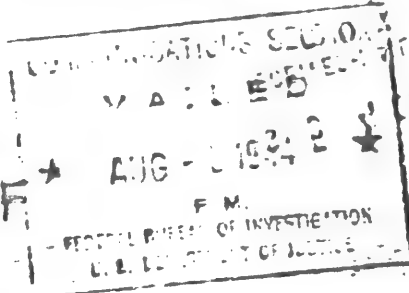
Reference is made to your teletype of July 28, 1944, concerning the reported disaffiliation on the part of the subject with the Communist Political Association. It is noted in your teletype that you have under consideration the advisability of interviewing Wright.

In connection with any interview you might undertake with Wright, it is suggested that you consider obtaining from him specific information concerning exploitation of the Negro race by the Communist Political Association. Furthermore, if the interview actually takes place a previous study should be made of Wright's articles and particularly pertinent comments he makes with regard to the Communist Political Association.

Any interview with Wright must, of course, be most discreet, particularly in light of his reported comments in which he laments the "regression" of the Communist Political Association's position with respect to the American Negro. From a review of the teletype you submitted in this regard, it would seem that Wright does not think the Communist Political Association revolutionary enough at the present time with respect to the advancement of the Negro. This should be considered seriously prior to any action on your part.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/ka



Tolson
E. A. Tamm
Clegg
Glavin
Ladd
Nichols
Rosen
Tracy
Acers
Carson
Harbo
Mohr
Quinn
Nease
Gandy

78 SEP 16 1944

Aug 5 11 14 AM '44
RECEIVED HEADQUARTERS

FILE

To Tell the Truth

Mr. Wright Didn't Discover It

By Robert Minor

did

IN the half-dozen years that Richard Wright was a member of the Communist Party he did not discover that the Communists have no concern whatever with persuading people to be loyal to the Communist organization per se. He sat in meetings for years, and did not discover that the only thing required is that you be loyal to the people's cause. If you are that, then loyalty to the Communist organization will take care of itself.



Wright has a piece in the Atlantic Monthly, in which, whether inadvertently or not, he takes a position on far bigger questions than whether a person likes Communists.

Within the past few years, and faster in recent months, the Negro people have shaped in final form their answers to the national question for the Negro of the United States: That this is their country as well as anyone else's, and that they will have their equal place in it and will fight knock-down-and-drag-out for that equal place, and will win, and those who oppose it will go the way of Martin and Joe and Cotton Ed and Vierck and Dilling and Goebbels.

RICHARD WRIGHT forgot that this fight is on, and with his head stuck into his typewriter he wrote:

"Could a Negro ever live half-way like a human being in this goddamn country?"

That was all the editor needed to have Richard Wright's signature to, in the main; but Wright kept on and said what logically goes with it—because the big, all absorbing, worldwide fight in this war keeps pushing us along. He wrote:

"Then . . . a Jewish chap . . . He introduced me to a Jewish boy . . . (again) to a Jewish boy . . . Jewish chap . . . a short, fringed, black-haired, well-read fellow . . ."

like: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe and Glotz Augen."

Throughout our country, as we all know, there are desperate efforts to accentuate the "racial" divisions in every possible complexity. "Negro against Jew," is the Gerald Smith way of getting Negro support for an anti-Negro movement; since anti-Semitism is only a form of white chauvinism. And Negro against trade unions, purely as an aid to the old villainess of trade-union exclusiveness against the Negro. The first demand on a man who is to remain in the Communist movement is that he be a democrat—in the broad, nonparty sense of the word—a republican in the great long-time historical meaning. And even Richard Wright's remarkably talented book, *Native Son*, had as its weakest side, as Ben Davis pointed out at the time, a certain lack of sense of the vast democratic character of the Negro's struggle of the ages. Now the greatest "national" struggle of all time is raging to its fiery climax in which the victory lies with all peoples seeking freedom. And Mr. Wright forgot that certain editorial people are glad to get anything in election time that seems to line up talented people on the untalented side of the enormous struggle.

The extermination of the Jim Crow system is going to be realized because this is not a "god-damn country." History has advanced; the day has dawned when the mass of Negro workers is entering the trade unions, and the trade unions are beginning to fight for their rights; voters of the biggest city of the world, composed of an alliance of demo-

cratic-willed white and Negro people, elect a Negro to represent them in the City Council on a platform that includes abolition of the Jim Crow system, and will elect to the United States Congress another great Negro leader—all a very modest beginning, only a bridgehead for a fight; but the people have decided. Mr. Richard Wright lends his name to the other opinion.

CAN we do without Richard Wright? Yes, a great movement of the people can do without any individual. The movement goes on, and rises, even when the individual we once loved pulls himself down. Didn't many get discouraged and quit before the great Scottsboro campaign in the 1930's; and didn't thousands of others then come with vision in their eyes for every individual who, with faded eyes, pulled himself down?

One who came in 1932 in the height of the surging movement of the people stirred by the Scottsboro struggle, was a fine young man, living in that Hoover day as a part-time street-sweeper in Chicago, one of those many sons of the people in whom the spark of genius needs but to be fanned by millions of brothers in a common cause, Richard Wright.

Is he gone, now? Others will come; more than you can count; and firmer; more able to reject those who say we will not succeed in living all as human beings "in this goddamn country," and who translates into our political speech: "Der Jude mit haengender Unterlippe . . ."

Wright says, "I lay in bed thinking, I've got to go it alone . . ."

You are not alone, Mr. Wright. You are in bad company.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 6068 RDD/ML

This is a clipping from
page 6 of the
DAILY WORKER
Date 8-15-44
Clipped at the Seat of
Government.

VCO-157461-A
NOT RECORDED
14 87 AUG 16 1944

EX-50

AT

WRIGHT, R.
218

b7c

New York 7, New York

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

100-4931

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

CONFIDENTIAL
August 8, 1944.

Director, FBI

Re: COMMUNIST POLITICAL ASSOCIATION
INTERNAL SECURITY - C

Dear Sir:

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

b1
b2
b7C
b7D

Very truly yours,

E. E. CONROY
SAC

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
EXCEPT WHERE SHOWN
OTHERWISE

Encls. (4)

cc. NY file #100-41674

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) OF class
DATE 10-21-81 ans

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

RECORDED

CLASS. & EXT. BY SP8 BTJ/mae
REASON - FCIM II, 1-2.4.2
DATE OF REVIEW 8-25-81

100-1-1-1
AUG 28 1944
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
INITIALS ON-ORIGIN

WR 1645, R, 217

17

8-25-81

38

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
New York, New York**

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Acers	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....
Miss	.....

September 14, 1943

DEC
100-41674

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received by this office on September 10, 1943, concerning RICHARD WRIGHT the Colored novelist who is being considered a key figure in the New York Field Division.

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy
E. E. CONROY

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) 2046
DATE 6-9-77

Enclosure,
copy for 65-12830



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

100-157464-7
SEP 17 1943

100-157464-161
RECORDED COPY

Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
New York, New York

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Miss Gandy	.....
Miss	.....

September 14, 1943

DEC
100-41674

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [redacted] received at this office on September 10, 1943 concerning [redacted] RICHARD WRIGHT, the famed colored novelist who is considered a key figure in this office.

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) 100-41674

Very truly yours,
E. E. CONROY
SAC

COPIES DESTROYED
153 AUG 20 1960



Enclosure
copy for N.Y.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BT/SL

WRIGHT, 54 OCT 14 1943
R. 220

b2
b7D

b7C

delivered
90-40-11
6-9-77

100-157461-6

SEP 17 1943

**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
New York, New York**

Mr. Tolson	.....
Mr. E. A. Tamm	.....
Mr. Clegg	.....
Mr. Coffey	.....
Mr. Glavin	.....
Mr. Ladd	.....
Mr. Nichols	.....
Mr. Rosen	.....
Mr. Tracy	.....
Mr. Acers	.....
Mr. Carson	.....
Mr. Hendon	.....
Mr. Mumford	.....
Mr. Starke	.....
Mr. Quinn Tamm	.....
Mr. Nease	.....
Mr. Landy	.....
Miss Gandy	.....

September 14, 1943

DEC
100-41674

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY (C)
SECURITY MATTER

Dear Sir:

Enclosed are the original and one copy of the report of [REDACTED] received by this office on September 10, 1943, concerning RICHARD WRIGHT the Colored novelist who is being considered a key figure in the New York Field Division.

Copies of instant report are being placed in the appropriate New York Files.

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy
E. E. CONROY

APPROPRIATE AGENCIES
AND FIELD OFFICES
ADVISED BY ROUTING
SLIP(S) 10-246
DATE 6-9-77

Enclosure,
copy for 65-12830



ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP-1

RECORDED
&
INDEXED

100-157464-7
SEP 17 1943

WRIGHT
219

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXXFEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
FOIPA DELETED PAGE INFORMATION SHEET

1 Page(s) withheld entirely at this location in the file. One or more of the following statements, where indicated, explain this deletion.

- ☒ Deleted under exemption(s) b2, b7D with no segregable material available for release to you.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party with no reference to you or the subject of your request.
- ☐ Information pertained only to a third party. Your name is listed in the title only.
- ☐ Document(s) originating with the following government agency(ies) _____, was/were forwarded to them for direct response to you.

_____ Page(s) referred for consultation to the following government agency(ies); _____ as the information originated with them. You will be advised of availability upon return of the material to the FBI.

_____ Page(s) withheld for the following reason(s):

- ☐ For your information: _____
- ☒ The following number is to be used for reference regarding these pages:
100-157464-4 enclosure

XXXXXX
XXXXXX
XXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 X DELETED PAGE(S) X
 X NO DUPLICATION FEE X
 X FOR THIS PAGE X
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

WRIGHT, E. 219

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1
THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674

JK

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK CITY	DATE WHEN MADE 5/28/43	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 2/17, 3/1, 4/10; 5/6, 7/43	REPORT MADE BY [REDACTED] b7c
TITLE RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT			CHARACTER OF CASE CUSTODIAL DETENTION - C SEDITION

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

RICHARD WRIGHT, popular negro writer and former reporter on Daily Worker, according to an article in Daily Worker on 4/13/41 by RALPH WARNER, is a Communist. Other articles in the Worker indicate WRIGHT's Communist tendencies. He himself in so many words admits his affiliation.

[REDACTED] Selective Service classification 3-A.

- C -

REFERENCE:

Bureau file 100-157464.

Report of Special Agent **[REDACTED]** dated February 9, 1943 at New York City.

DETAILS:

AT NEW YORK.

Inasmuch as a review of RICHARD WRIGHT's writings indicate he is at least a fellow traveller if not a member of the Communist Party, additional inquiry has been made and is being set out below.

With reference to the reference report where certain sections of WRIGHT's novel "Twelve Million Black Voices"

APPROVED AND FORWARDED E. E. Conroy	SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE	DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES	
COPIES OF THIS REPORT		15 MAY 31 1943	RECORDED INDEXED EX - 32
5 - Bureau 1 - Capt. R. C. MacFall, ONI 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, G-2 3 - New York.		b7c	

WRIGHT, R 220

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 1-26-81 BY SP-1 BTJ/lhe

NY file
100-41674

12
M...
a "How Big?"
just another

were set out as possibly falling within the violation of the sedition statute, a brief review of this book does not indicate that any other portion of the novel is of an sedition nature.

"Twelve Million Black Voices" is a fictitious story of the social conditions of the Negro in the United States from the first slave days to the present in which he discusses the progress of the Negro.

WRIGHT was also the author of the popular novel "Native Son" and when questioned by writers and critics why he created such a character as "Bigger", he explained same in an article which was published in "The Saturday Review" of June 1, 1940, page 18. He discussed pro and con what prompted him to write such a novel and to create such a character as "Bigger" from which, among other things, is taken the following excerpt:

"Another thought kept me from writing. What would my own white and black comrades in the Communist Party say."

From such a published statement, one would assume WRIGHT to be a member of the Party or at least a fellow traveller.

The American-Journal, New York daily newspaper of February 15, 1943 states that RICHARD WRIGHT was a former reporter on the Daily Worker. WRIGHT's picture appears in the "Negroes and the War", published and distributed by the Office of War Information.

The files of the New York office also reflect that RICHARD WRIGHT's name appears on the "Committee to Free Earl Browder", which list was published in the People's Voice, a New York Negro weekly newspaper issued March 21, 1942.

[redacted] advised that on March 6, 1942 WRIGHT's name appeared on the "American Committee to Save Refugees," and on September 18, 1942 was listed as one of the officers of the League of American Writers, advocating a second front in Europe.

[redacted]

[redacted]

[redacted]

WRIGHT, R. 221

NY file
100-41674

[REDACTED] b7D
[REDACTED] b2
[REDACTED] b7D

It is noted that WRIGHT's name appeared frequently in the Daily Worker during 1941 and 1942. In an issue dated February 25, 1941, page 4, column 1, it is noted that RICHARD WRIGHT was listed along with EARL BROWDER, BEN GOLD and JOE NORTH as one of the speakers at which time the Daily Worker celebrated MIKE GOLD's 25th anniversary, in the labor movement.

In an issue dated February 28, 1941 WRIGHT was listed as one of the writers who would greet THEODORE DREISER at a testimonial luncheon attended March 1, 1941 at the Commodore Hotel under the auspices of the American Council on Soviet Relations. Others to be present were JESSICA SMITH, editor of "Soviet Russia Today", CLIFFORD ODETS, Dr. JOHN A. KINGSBURY and others.

In an issue of March 19, 1941, page 5, column 7, WRIGHT greeted WILLIAM Z. FOSTER, National Chairman of the Communist Party on his 60th Birthday.

In an issue dated March 22, 1941 WRIGHT along with RUTH McKENNEY, was reported to have accepted to serve on the Board of Honorary Chairmen of the May Day Committee.

In an issue of April 5, 1941, page 7, column 2, RICHARD WRIGHT's name appeared with other writers in what was known as the "Call to the 4th Congress of the League of America" to be held in New York City on June 6 and 8, 1941 to discuss how best writers can resist the trend toward war, what to do to restore the WPA and what to do in defense of culture.

In an issue dated April 13, 1941, the Sunday Worker, page 7, column 1, RALPH WARNER discussed the play "Native Son" and among other things admits that "Max", one of the characters in the play is symbolic of a Communist. "However, that nowhere in the play is he called a Communist but he is clearly a sympathizer." WARNER states however, that RICHARD WRIGHT is a Communist and the conception of Max and of his entire play is.

NY file
100-41674

In an issue of April 21, 1941, page 1, there is an editorial which speaks about WRIGHT's stirring condemnation of the imprisonment of EARL BROWDER and of a long forward by JAMES W. FORD contained in WRIGHT's "Bright the Morning Star", a short story in pamphlet form printed by the International Publishers. FORD highly endorsed WRIGHT and the article also pertains to a part of a letter to the International Publishers by WRIGHT in which he says he wants no royalty for this work and those that are received are to accrue to the "Earl Browder Defense Fund."

In an issue dated June 9, 1941, page 1, WRIGHT's name appears among those of the Writers Congress who adopted a firm anti-war program.

In an issue dated July 24, 1941, page 7, column 3, it is noted that WRIGHT's name appears among the American writers who pledged full support to Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

A change of attitude of RICHARD WRIGHT and other writers is pointed out in that in early June they adopted a firm anti-war program and in July they advocated full support to the Soviet Union. Further, that Germany declared war on Russia on June 22, 1941.

In an issue dated August 18, 1941 WRIGHT appears on the Citizen's Committee to Free Earl Browder and in an issue dated August 11, 1941, page 9, WRIGHT states that HARRY BRIDGES is a friend of America and has become a symbol in America and that those who fight against him are enemies of America.

In an issue dated October 22, 1941, page 1, paragraph 1, WRIGHT's name appears as one of the members of a group of citizens calling for a release of EARL BROWDER.

On November 19, 1941, page 3, in the Sunday Worker, RICHARD WRIGHT was declared winner of the Spingarn medal for the writing of "Native Son." Also in this issue WRIGHT along with A. W. BERRY, Secretary of the Communist Party, Reverend ADAM CLAYTON POWELL, Jr., and HORACE MARSHALL, Vice-President of the National Negro Congress, protested against police brutality and general economic conditions existent in Harlem.

In an issue dated February 13, 1942, page 7, column 4, a letter of WRIGHT's was published dealing with the controversy on music which letter is dated February 10, 1942 and begins as follows:

"Dear Comrade Sender Garlin:"

WRIGHT, R 223

NY file
100-41674

things states that he would like to see letters from the public on "how can recruitment of negroes to the Communist Party be increased." This letter also stated that "The Communist Party is the only political party in America vitally concerned about culture and its problems."

It is also noted that in JAMES W. FORD's book "The Negro and the Democratic Front", on page 193, FORD states that he wants to "express publically the high appreciation of our Negro comrades and Negro people for the splendid contributions of RICHARD WRIGHT, LANGSTON HUGHES and other artists and musicians of our people."

On October 14, 1942 [REDACTED] advised that RICHARD WRIGHT, a former known Communist Party member, had split with the Party because of his dissatisfaction with the way the Party handled the Negro question.

[REDACTED]
327 Lafayette Street, Brooklyn, furnished the following information as reflected in the files of that board concerning WRIGHT.

He advised that WRIGHT's questionnaire was returned May 9, 1941 at which time WRIGHT resided at 473 West 104th Street, New York City. However, he presently resides at 7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn, New York. On May 28, 1941 WRIGHT was placed in 3-A classification because of collateral dependents. On July 1, 1942 his collateral dependency was removed and he was placed in classification 1-A.

On July 6, 1942 he was about to be inducted into the Army and he asked for a 90 day extension, which was granted. On November 2, 1942 a continuation of this extension was granted. On November 16, 1942 he was placed in 3-A in order to permit him an opportunity to take Volunteer Candidate Training, but was subsequently rejected.

The questionnaire reflects that WRIGHT was born September 4, 1908 at Natchez, Mississippi. His education was given as eight years of elementary school. He states his employment experience is that of a novelist, playwright, poet and newspaper reporter. He did not set forth his place of employment but advised that he was engaged as a writer of political and labor news from 1937 to 1938. This might possibly be the period that he was a reporter for the Daily Worker.

WRIGHT furnished a list of his writings to the Local Board. It was noted that "Uncle Tom's Children" according to WRIGHT was written by him and was later translated into Russian by the U.S.S.R. and issued in international literature.

b2
b7D
b7C

NY file
100-41674

His questionnaire further reflects that he was married March 10, 1941 at Coytesville, New Jersey. His dependents are given as that of his mother ELLA WRIGHT, [REDACTED] NATHAN WRIGHT, father, [REDACTED] LEON WRIGHT, brother, [REDACTED] and CLEO WRIGHT, sister-in-law at the same address. b7c

WRIGHT listed as property one house valued at \$3,000. [REDACTED] WRIGHT is divorced from his first wife, because on June 7, 1942 he listed his dependents as ELLEN WRIGHT, wife, age 29 and JULIA WRIGHT, two months, daughter, born April 12, 1942.

[REDACTED] advised that the file further reflects a letter from the Office of War Information, New York City, in which was transmitted a program as prepared for them by RICHARD WRIGHT. The records further reflected that WRIGHT has lived at the following addresses: b7c

467 Waverly Avenue, Brooklyn. (1940)

473 West 140th Street, New York City. (May 1941)

11 Revere Place, Brooklyn. (July 7, 1941)

7 Middagh Street, Brooklyn. (Present address) b7c

[REDACTED] advised that the Board's association with RICHARD WRIGHT had been very pleasant and that he had been very cooperative and prompt in his transactions with them.

A description of WRIGHT as furnished by [REDACTED] is as follows:

Age	34
Born	September 4, 1908, Natchez, Mississippi
Height	5'7"
Weight	158 pounds
Build	Medium
Eyes	Brown
Hair	Black
Complexion	Dark
Race	Negro
Occupation	Writer
Marital status	Married
Criminal record	None
Scars or marks	None
Citizenship	American
Marital status	Married

No further investigation is being conducted and this

WRIGHT, R. 225

NY file
1674

IDENTITY OF CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS:

[REDACTED] mentioned in the report of Special Agent [REDACTED] dated May 28, 1943 at New York City, is a flimsy report from G-2, Governor's Island, and is being made an informant in view of the fact that the Bureau has expressed a desire not to have them mentioned in reports.

b2
b7D
b7C

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] who is being made an Informant in accordance with a Bureau request.

Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice
New York, N.Y.

EMC
100-41674

b7c

March 3, 1943

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY
SEDITION

Dear Sir:

In reference to Bureau letter of January 20, 1943, (Bureau file 100-157464) requesting the status of the above entitled matter, this is to advise this case has been reassigned and placed in line for immediate investigation.

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy
E. E. CONROY
SAC

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 8161/ku

COPIES DESTROYED

153 AUG 10 1960



WRIGHT, R.

227

RECORDED

MAR 5 1943

b7c

COPY

COPY

Los Angeles, Calif.
June 18 - 45

Dear Sir:

Richard Wright the negro who wrote black boy and Native Son books are doing no good and a lot of harm they are causing disunity and spreading race hatred and if you people dont want America tore up the same as Germany you had better put a stop to sutch people as that poor old ass of a Southern Senator with his back to Africa move ment and sutch old fools as that poor crazy old Richard Wright. We colored people are good natured all we want is justice a good job with good pay for work well done. Every time we turn around some one is complaining nagging constantly critercising every thing we do. Richard Wright seem to be unhappy in America so we wish to God he would leave and go some place else for he is geting on our nerves. I and all the other colored people know that ninty percent of the trash that he puts in his books are lies, but if people in Germany should get a hold of Black boy I'm awfull afraid Uncle Sam's face is going to be red for you cant rule a German if you cant rule America. And the lies that poor sick braned fool Richard Wright put in his books sure dont do America any good in the foreigner's eye sight. We colored people want Richard Wright's books baned if he cant write a story without trying to agitate race trouble we want him to pick himself a new vocation. Just get a copy of his books and go through them. We dont see why he isn't in the Army anyway. If he went to India or some other place and saw how horrible those people live then he would see how far advanced we are. After all we colored people are doing the best we can if you would get a copy of the negro hand book for 1942 you would see just how well we are doing. We are only a small race of people. We colored people are very discouraged and that is the reason sixty million little bity Japanese can fight all most two billion people without a allie and hole out so long. Because that Billion colored people are on the point of giving up. After all this is not our war and if we win we loose So I suppose there is nothing to do but just say to hell with the hole bloody mess.

This is from that poor old fools book Black boy this is enough to provoke the devil.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED:
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 11/11/00 BY 60322

WRIGHT, R.

229

70

Los Angeles Cal

July 1945

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BT/bca

We are writing you people in
hope you will be able to have books
like Black boy and also native son
by the negro Richard Wright ^{RICHARD WRIGHT}
banned as he is spreading race hatred
and causing disunity. If you
will look through the many books
you will see how he rant and
rave like a mad man. It is terrible
and also he use to much filthy
expressions the white writers don't
do that. ^{RECORDED 109-157464-29}
^{INDEXED} ^{EX-4} ¹¹⁴⁵ ¹¹⁴⁵
the sake of unity please have his
books banned. they are doing no good



**Federal Bureau of Investigation
United States Department of Justice**

New York 7, New York



IN REPLY, PLEASE REFER TO
FILE NO. 100-41574

MR

Director, FBI

RE: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER - C
Bureau File 100-157464

May 18, 1945

Dear Sir:

The copy of the Security Index Card maintained at this field office relative to the above-named individual has been revised and is now captioned as follows:

WRIGHT, RICHARD NATHANIEL
NEGRO

NATIVE BORN

COMMUNIST

Apartment C-23
89 Lefferts Place
Brooklyn, New York (Res.)

Free-lance writer at residence (Bus.)

Born Sept. 4-08
Natchez, Miss.

REFER TO BUREAU LETTER DATED MAY 7, 1945 IN INSTANT CASE. NEW YORK CARD HAS BEEN MADE UP.

In accordance with Bureau instructions, a white 5" x 8" card, captioned as above, has been prepared and filed in the Confidential Security Index Card File of this office. Appropriate disposition has been made of the card previously maintained in the Card File, in accordance with existing instructions. It is suggested that the original Security Index Card maintained at the Seat of Government be revised in agreement with the caption above set out.

Very truly yours,

E. E. Conroy

E. E. CONROY
Special Agent in Charge

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY 88067/hce

WHEN THE ACTION REQUIRED HEREBY HAS BEEN COMPLETED, THIS LETTER

WRIGHT, R. 231

OFFICIAL BUSINESS



Los Angeles, California

INNOVATION
JUL 3 D.C.
46-AM
MAY 1945

PENALTY FOR PRIVATE USE TO AVOID
PAYMENT OF POSTAGE: \$300

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-22-01 BY 60322

COPIES FOR INFORMATION
TO BE ADDED
NAME OF ADDRESS
NO. SUPPLEMENT
DATE RECEIVED BY ORDER

267

WRIGHT, R. 232

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

100-41674

:MICG

TO : Director, FBI

DATE: February 26, 1945

FROM: SAC, New York City

SUBJECT: RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT
SECURITY MATTER C
(Bureau file 100-157464)

Reference is made to the report of Special Agent [redacted] made at New York City on September 5, 1944 entitled RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT; INTERNAL SECURITY C. This report sets out a lead for the New York Field Division, "After careful consideration interview the subject WRIGHT concerning his association with the Communist Party."

After very careful consideration it is felt inadvisable to interview WRIGHT particularly as the basis of his break with the Communist Party, as appears from his recent articles in the Atlantic Monthly Magazine, is the Communist Party's failure to be sufficiently radical and militant with respect to the advancement of the Negro. These articles also indicate a complete disapproval by WRIGHT of the American way of life.

Also considered in arriving at the decision not to interview WRIGHT are the facts that he has been classified 4-F due to severe psycho-neurosis and his contacts with his Local Selective Service Board have reflected his interest in the problem of the Negro to be almost an obsession.

In view of the subject's public break with the Communist Party, he is no longer being carried as a Key Figure by the New York Field Division, however, a Security Index Card on him is being maintained by the New York Office due to his militant attitude toward the Negro problem.

The only information secured by this office concerning WRIGHT that has not already been reported is that he was listed as a member of the National Committee of the International Labor Defense in a pamphlet entitled, "Equal Justice and Democracy in the Service of Victory," published by the International Labor Defense in September 1944. WRIGHT'S residence address has been verified as Apt. C-23, 89 Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, New York, as of February 15, 1945.

This investigation is being placed in a closed status by the New York Field Division. In the event further investigation becomes necessary, it will be reported under a Security Matter C character.

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP8 BTJ/ke

RECORDED

INDEXED

MAR 1 1945

50 APR 16 1945

WRIGHT, R.
233

FILE

29225

OK

New Times

IN **BLACK BOY**, Richard Wright has written a furious and terrifying story of the impact of the Jimcrow system upon human beings in the deep South. The result is a picture which challenges America.

There may be exaggerations in the book. Many of the incidents may be highly fictional, and never really happened to Wright. But what difference does that make if they happened to some other young Negro. The point is that they should not happen to any Negro and the conditions which corrode the Negro family must be eliminated. For they victimize not only the Negro citizen; they suffocate the poor whites to a more or less degree, and retard the development of the whole South.



It does no good to run away from this essential significance of the book for the purpose of grappling with the secondary aspects, some of which are contained in the book, and others of which surround the author's views and his writing of the book. It is of supreme importance that this main picture of the life and death of the Negro under the reign of white supremacy should hit America with full force. For it concerns America. Any attempt to bypass this over-all picture will lessen its force and thereby lead to an underestimation of its starkness and blunt the sharp need for correctives. When this main picture is changed in its principal outlines, the derivative secondary aspects will disappear. But until it does, naturally there are going to be all kinds of confusion, badly

by Benjamin J. Davis, Jr.

focused perspectives, and misleading ambiguities and conclusions—many of which mar **Black Boy**.

THE book is intensely subjective. In fact, it is limited by its subjectiveness. But people are not born subjective, and it is clear that a young Negro who has to run the gauntlet of every type of oppression—just short of lynching—has subjectiveness forced into his marrow. This heavy pressure pushes him to view the world in which he lives entirely through glasses colored by his own personal suffering from national oppression, which suffering in one form or another he meets every day. Those who complain of that intense subjectivity are forever stopped from doing so, unless they realize what brought it about, and also help to eradicate the diseased soil from which it grows.

It is important, however, that this subjectiveness be overcome. It can be done and is being done since there are new trends and factors which make the overcoming possible. It is also necessary to overcome it, lest one fall into the trap of frustration and defeatism which the white supremacy forces have set. **Black Boy** says some wholly unacceptable things about the Negro's capacity for genuine emotion. Here the author's subjectivity has overcome reality. For the truly remarkable achievement of the Negro is that he has made such singular contributions to America—culturally and musically and in all other fields—despite the system of national oppression which tends to thwart his every effort. The point is: Will Wright himself be able

Some Impressions Of Black Boy

to overcome this limitation of subjectivity imposed upon him in order that he may see clearly, and participate with, the forces which would destroy the myth of white supremacy. Inasmuch as Wright has attained literary prominence, and some circles have thrust upon him the mantle of spokesman for his people, he above all must maintain a clear head.

THERE is no doubt that Wright wields a brilliant and stormy pen. Few story tellers are his equal. But is this sufficient when there are brilliant writers on both sides of the barricades. It is vitally important that the artist who reflects and the artist who sees the way out should be one and the same person. For both these factors exist in the objective real world, outside one's self. Jimcrow is here, yet Jimcrow is also being driven defeated from the scene. Life is not static. One has to see both to be realistic, and to shape the future.

Wright does not see the positive, constructive side, and therefore the mirror of his pen does not give a complete picture. He omits the biggest new thing which is happening in the world today—the main progressive currents from which even the South is no immune. Apparently he is isolated from these developments—and far removed from the people. Such isolationism can lead to stagnation—to form without content. It is pretty difficult to see what happened in 1915 if one is isolated from 1945. While Wright is, of course, not responsible for **Black Boy** conditions, he is, however, responsible for his own voluntary act of withdrawal from the forces which are among the leaders of the fight for a new world. He can blame himself.

INDEXED 100-157414

NOT RECORDED

APR 18 1945

This is a clipping from:
page 9 sec. 1 of

THE WORKER

Date 4-1-45

Clipped at the seat of
GovernmentALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

WRIGHT, R. 234

~~SECRET~~
WAR DEPARTMENT
Military Intelligence Service
Washington

NOV 2 1942

Subject: Letter of Transmittal.
To: Lt. Col. J. Edgar Hoover
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Department of Justice

The attached communications are forwarded for your information and such action as you consider advisable.

For the Chief, Military Intelligence Service:

John T. Bissell
J. T. BISSELL
Colonel, General Staff,
Asst. Executive Officer, M. I. S.

Enclosures:

REGRADED UNCLASSIFIED
ON JAN 6 1988
BY: CDR USAINSCOM FORD
AUTH: P 1603 DOD 5200.1-E

*Declassified
2040
JAN 6 1977*

N151

N151

*15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
5
4
3
2
1*

WRIGHT, R. 237

100-157464-1

12 AGO
OCT 14 1942
New York, N.Y.

Dear Sir:

I beg to call to your attention books by one Richard Wright designed to stir racial dissension in America confining my charges to one entitled "12,000,000 Black Voices". Its entire contents are designed to destroy the morale of an important percent of American citizens under call to the armed forces of the United States; In particular I refer to page 143 in which Japan is held up as the possible saviour of the colored race, this by inference plays directly into the hands of our enemies in arms, therefore constituting a treasonable utterance in time of war.

This publication has had a large circulation among colored people and other enemies within the United States; Responsible for serious violations of law and order in all parts of the Country, especially where there are large colored populations.

Material of this character in the hands of designing persons can lead to many forms of sabotage and result in a general breakdown of morale bound to corrupt the use of national unity so necessary in an all out "win the War" effort by America and her allies.

Two other books by this writer are equally dangerous to national well-being the names of which I will gladly supply upon request from your office.

In addition to the books, this ties in with one of the most dangerous appeals to racial dissension, of alien origin, being used by subversive forces at work in America.

Very truly yours

Samuel P. Rosen

12 AGO

OCT 14 1942

David P. Rosen
215 East 17th Street
New York, N.Y.

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

Form No. 1

THIS CASE ORIGINATED AT

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

NY FILE NO. 100-41674 JMG

REPORT MADE AT NEW YORK, NEW YORK	DATE WHEN MADE 2-9-43	PERIOD FOR WHICH MADE 2, 3, 5, 11-43	REPORT MADE BY CHARACTER OF CASE INTERNAL SECURITY SEDITION
TITLE RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT			

SYNOPSIS OF FACTS:

Subject born in Natchez, Mississippi, 1909, and at age of 15 ran away from orphan asylum and then bummed his way throughout the country. Subject employed by WPA from 1-3-38 to 5-17-39. Subject the author of "Native Son", a novel which was later adapted into a play by same name, and this play was included in "The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941". Information regarding subject's book, "Twelve Million Black Voices" set out.

AGENCY 100-1114
 REG. REC'D 4-4-43
 REP'T FORW. 7-6-43
 BY 14

- C -

REFERENCE:

(Bureau File Number 100-157464)
 Bureau Letter to New York dated December 9, 1942.

DETAILS:

A review of the indices of the Public Library of New York City, located at 5th Avenue and 42nd Street, reflected that the subject's true name is RICHARD NATHANIEL WRIGHT and that he was born in 1909. The indices also reflected that the subject wrote the following books: "Fire and Cloud", "Twelve Million Black Voices", "Native Son", and "Uncle Tom's Children".

Mr. M. B. TOLSON, in the 1939 issue of the "Modern Quarterly", Volume Eleven, Number Five, in reviewing the works of the subject, stated that RICHARD WRIGHT was born "on a broken down plantation near Natchez, Mississippi, a State which leads the Union in illiteracy, Christianity and mobocracy. His family travelled from town to town like grub-worms. His father got tired of his poverty-ravaged household and deserted the family. Paralysis struck his mother down and he entered an orphan asylum but ran off at fifteen. In Memphis he haunted Beale Street and later he bummed his way all over the country, fighting, stealing, lying. He'd reached only the eighth grade in school. Somewhere

APPROVED AND FORWARDED: *E. E. Courtney* SPECIAL AGENT IN CHARGE

DO NOT WRITE IN THESE SPACES

COPIES OF THIS REPORT

- ⑤ - Bureau
- 1 - Capt. R. C. MacFall, OH1
- 1 - Col. S. V. Constant, G-2
- 2 - New York

100-157464-2

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED

WRIGHT
 239

100-157484 -1

Date: December 9, 1942

To: SAC, New York

From: J. Edgar Hoover - Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation

Subject: RICHARD WRIGHT
INTERNAL SECURITY - SEDITION

Transmitted herewith are copies of a communication addressed by [redacted] to the Honorable Henry L. Stimson, Secretary of War, at Washington, D. C., under date of October 13, 1942. The Bureau of course received this communication by reference from the Military Intelligence Service. b7C

In view of [redacted] specific allegations as to certain writings of subject, it is desired that your office make inquiry of sources available to you for the purpose of determining whether the book entitled "Twelve Million Black Voices" or other publications of subject are in fact given to the expression of statements having significance under the Sedition Statutes. If possible, you should secure a copy of this publication as well as other writings of subject and review the same for the possible presence of such material.

If your inquiry develops information of an affirmative nature, you should of course cause an investigation to be undertaken as to subject's background, inclinations, and current activities.

Mr. Tolson _____
Mr. E. A. Tamm _____
Mr. Clegg _____
Mr. Glavin _____
Mr. Ladd _____

Mr. Nichols _____
Mr. Rosen _____
Mr. Tracy _____
Mr. Carson _____
Mr. Coffey _____
Mr. Hendon _____
Mr. Kramer _____
Mr. McGuire _____
Mr. Quinn Tamm _____

COMMUNICATIONS SECTION
MAILED 10
★ DEC 10 1942 P.M.
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED
DATE 8-25-81 BY SP1812/lee

30-11

NOV 10 1942

WRIGHT
R. 240

11-21

b7C

NY 100-41674

b2
b7D

along the gutted road it dawned upon him that he needed an education. And then, whether digging ditches or clerking in the post office, he devoured the contents of newspapers and magazines as well as books that came his way."

[REDACTED] advised the writer that the subject had been employed by the WPA on a Federal Writers' Project from January 3, 1938, to May 17, 1939, when he resigned to accept private employment. At this time subject was residing at 809 Saint Nicholas Avenue, New York City.

"The Best Plays of 1940 and 1941" by BURNS MANTLE included the subject's play, "Native Son", which was produced from the subject's novel by the same name.

Mr. BROOKS ATKINSON in the New York Times had the following to say about the subject's play, "Native Son": "In the drama Mr. GREEN and Mr. WRIGHT work in a more objective style. Without the subjective background their defense of Bigger Thomas's ghastly crime in the court scene sounds like generalized pleading. It lacks the stinging enlightenment of the last third of Mr. WRIGHT's novel. But that completes this column's bill of exceptions to the biggest American drama of the season."

The novel, "Twelve Million Black Voices", which was written by the subject, was published by the Viking Press in New York City in October, 1941, and this book is divided into four parts: (1) Our Strange Birth; (2) Inheritors of Slavery; (3) Death on the City Pavements; and (4) Men in the Making. In the foreword, Mr. WRIGHT states "while this novel purports to render a broad picture of the processes of negro life in the United States, intentionally it does not include in its considerations those areas of negro life which comprise the so-called 'talented tenth' or the isolated islands of mulatto leadership which are still to be found in many parts of the South or the growing and influential negro middle class professional and business men of the North who have, for the past twenty years or more, formed a sort of liaison corps between the whites and the blacks".

The reference letter reflected that on Page 143 of the above-mentioned novel, there was material that appeared to be seditious in nature; and for the benefit of the Bureau, the above-mentioned page is being quoted in full:

"There are millions of us and we are moving in all directions. All our lives we have been catapulted into arenas where, had we thought consciously of invading them, we would have hung back. A sense of constant change has stolen silently into our lives and has become operative in our personalities as a law of living.

NY 100-41674

"There are some of us who feel our hurts so deeply that we find it impossible to work with whites; we feel that it is futile to hope or dream in terms of American life. Our distrust is so great that we form intensely racial and nationalistic organizations and advocate the establishment of a separate state, a forty-ninth state, in which we black folk would live.

"There are even today among us groups that forlornly plan a return to Africa."

"There are others of us who feel the need of the protection of a strong nation so keenly that we admire the harsh and imperialistic policies of Japan and ardently hope that the Japanese will assume the leadership of the 'darker races'.

"As our consciousness changes, as we come of age, as we shed our folk swaddling clothes, so run our lives in a hundred directions.

"Today, all of us black folk are not poor. A few of us have money. We make it as the white folk make theirs, but our money-making is restricted to our own people. Many of us black folk have managed to send our children to school, and a few of our children are now professional and business men whose standards of living approximate those of middle-class whites. Some of us own small businesses; others devote their lives to law and medicine.

"But the majority of us still toil on the plantations, work in heavy industry, and labor in the kitchens of the Lords of the Land and the Bosses of the Buildings.

"The general dislocation of life during the depression caused many white workers to learn through chronic privation that they could not protect their standard of living so long as we blacks were excluded from their unions. Many hundreds of thousands of them found that they could not fight successfully for increased wages and union recognition unless we stood shoulder to shoulder with them. As a consequence, many of us have recently become members of steel, automobile, packing and tobacco unions."

The following quotations are found on Page 146 of the same book and is the last page of the novel:

"The differences between black folk and white folk are not blood or color, and the ties that bind us are deeper than those that separate us. The common road of hope which we all have travelled has brought us into a stronger kinship than any words, laws or legal claims."

"What do we black folk want? We want what others have, the right to share in the upward march of American life, the only life we remember or have

WRIGHT, R. 242

NY 100-41674

ever known. The Lord of the Land say: 'We will not grant this!' We answer: 'We ask you to grant us nothing. We are winning our heritage though our toll in suffering is great!' The Bosses of the Buildings say: 'Your problem is beyond solution!' We answer: 'Our problem is being solved. We are crossing the line you dared us to cross though we pay in the coin of death!' "

"The seasons of the plantation no longer dictate the lives of many of us; hundreds of thousands of us are moving into the sphere of conscious history."

"We are with the new tide. We stand at the crossroads. We watch each new procession. The hot wires carrying urgent appeals. Print compels us. Voices are speaking. Men are moving! And we shall be with them."

J → A "No 100" THAT
TAKEN DIRECTLY

- CLOSED -

STILL!
HAWK
PROV!

NY 100241674

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANT

b2
b7c
b7D

Special Agent [REDACTED] as mentioned in the report of
is [REDACTED] New York, New York, dated February 9, 1943.